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GOD

THE CREATOR AND LORD OF ALL

BY

SAMUEL HARRIS, D.D., LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY IN YALE UNIVERSITY

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VOLUME I.

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"He," — Pantaenus, Clement's teacher and predecessor, in the Headship of the School at Alexandria, — "the true Sicilian bee, gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a deathless element of knowledge. . . . The Stromata will contain the truth which is mingled with the doctrines of philosophy, or rather covered and hidden in them, as the edible part of a nut in the shell. For in my opinion it is fitting that the seeds of truth be kept for the husbandmen of the faith, and no others. I am not oblivious of what is babbled by some, who in their ignorance are frightened at every noise, and say that we ought to occupy ourselves with what is most necessary and which contains the faith; and that we should pass over what is beyond and superfluous, which wears out and detains us to no purpose in things which conduce nothing to the great end. Others think that philosophy was introduced into life by an evil influence for the ruin of men. But I shall show . . . that philosophy is in a sense a work of Divine Providence. . . . The course of truth is one. But into it, as into a perennial river, streams flow from all sides. . . . Some who think themselves naturally gifted, do not wish to touch either philosophy or logic; nay more, they do not wish to learn natural science. They demand bare faith alone, as if they expected, without bestowing any care on the vine, straightway to gather clusters from it. The Lord is figuratively described as the vine, from which, with pains and the art of husbandry according to the word, the fruit is to be gathered. We must prune, dig, bind, and do the other necessary work. . . . He who brings everything to bear on the development of the right life, producing examples from Greeks and Barbarians, is an expert searcher after truth, and is like the touchstone, which is supposed to distinguish the genuine gold from the spurious. He is a much-knowing gnostic and can distinguish sophistry from philosophy . . . rhetoric from dialectics, and the opinions of the sects in philosophy from the truth itself. How necessary it is for him who desires to be partaker of the power of God, to examine intellectual subjects philosophically. . . . For if we act not for the Word, we shall act against reason. The work accomplished through God is a rational work." — Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata, Book I., chaps. i., v., ix.*

"The more the chaff of a false faith flies away before any wind of temptation, the purer will be the mass of grain to be deposited in the granaries of the Lord." — TERTULLIAN.

"It seems to me evidence of negligence if, after we are confirmed in Christian faith, we do not seek to gain an intelligent knowledge of it." — ANSELM, *Cur Deus Homo; sub initio.*

"That intellectual light that is within us is nought else than a certain participated likeness of the Uncreated Light, in which are contained the eternal reasons." — THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Primae, Quaest.* 84, *a.* 5.

"It is an assured truth and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a farther proceeding therein doth bring the mind back to religion; for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes which are next unto the senses do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passeth on farther and seeth the dependence of causes and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe the highest link of Nature's chain must needs be tied to Jupiter's chair. To conclude, therefore, let no man upon a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's word or in the book of God's works, divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavor an endless progress or proficiency in both. Only let men beware that they apply both to charity, and not to swelling; to use, and not to ostentation. And again, that they do not unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together." — LORD BACON, *Advancement of Learning, Book I.* See also "Essays Civil and Moral," xvi. and "Meditationes Sacrae, of Atheism."

"Without school-divinity, a divine knows nothing logically; nor will he be able to satisfy a rational man." — SELDEN, *Table-Talk.*

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at; by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. . . . Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been

made in the present and the last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture." — BISHOP BUTLER, *Analogy, Part II., chap.* 3.

"The teacher of doctrine holds the highest position among the spiritual upbuilders of humanity, and in this respect stands higher than the lawgiver and artist. . . . What these are unable to accomplish, that alone the living word of doctrine effects. It descends into the depths of the human heart, pulsates in every artery, reaches every grade of culture, approaches children not less than adults. As the magic of art from the rough marble evokes a god, so the mightier magic of the word of God from the undeveloped human spirit evokes the divine image in man into joyous existence." — HAGENBACH, *Encykl. Theol.* § 7, *pp.* 11, 12.

"The real will never find an irremovable basis till it rests on the ideal." — JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *Democracy and Other Addresses, p.* 22.

> "Wisdom Supreme, the world is thine,
> The cup whereof thou art the wine,
> The light, the shade that ebbs and flows,
> Whatever comes, whatever goes —
> All things begin and end in thee."
>
> RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

> "I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it."
>
> BROWNING, *A Death in the Desert.*

"Whoever reads these writings, wherein he is equally convinced, let him go on with me; wherein he equally hesitates, let him investigate with me; wherein he finds himself in error, let him return to me; wherein he finds me in error, let him call me back to him. So let us go on together in the way of charity, pressing on toward Him of Whom it is said, Seek ye his face evermore." — AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate, Book I., chap. iii.*, 5.

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PART I

GOD, THE ONE ONLY ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

CHAPTER I

THE INTELLECTUAL ELEMENT IN RELIGION

TRUTH is the intellectual apprehension and expression of reality. As such it is the light and guide of man in the determinations of his will and the regulation of his feelings. Knowledge of reality also excites feeling and is the occasion of directing and exerting the energy in action. Theology is the intellectual apprehension and expression of what God really is in his relations to the universe, and especially to man, and of what man and the universe are in their relation to God. It is, therefore, the intellectual element in religion.

The study of theology necessarily begins with ascertaining the grounds or reasons of our belief in the existence of God and the reality of his revelation of himself to men; a belief spontaneous and inherent in all religions. We find that he exists; and that he reveals himself in the constitution and evolution of the physical universe; in the constitution and history of man; and pre-eminently in his action redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom, culminating in the coming of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Bible. This may be called Fundamental Theology, as being the result of our investigation of the fundamental grounds on which our religious belief in God rests. Naturally we inquire next, What can we know of God as thus revealed? What are his relations to the universe, and pre-eminently to man? What are the relations of the universe,

and pre-eminently of man, to him? The result of the action of the human mind attaining and declaring the answers to these questions, so far as possible within the limits of the human mind and the extent of God's revelation of himself, is called Doctrinal Theology, or Theological Doctrine. It is sometimes called Dogmatics and the doctrines, dogmas. But, because these are misleading and opprobrious words denoting formulas of belief prescribed and enforced by authority, they cannot be fairly applied to doctrines which claim assent only as the result of careful investigation and on reasonable evidence. Therefore conformity with truth requires the use of the other designations, Theological Doctrine, or Doctrinal Theology. What is called in the schools Systematic Theology includes both Fundamental Theology and Doctrinal. Because theology in its generic meaning is the product of the human mind ascertaining all that may be known of God through the various lines of his self-revelation, it must include not only systematic theology, but also the critical, exegetical, and historical study of the Bible, the study of the history of the Christian religion and of the kingdom of Christ in its development through the ages, the comparative study of the religions of the world and their sacred books and of the relation of all religions to the history and progress of man, and the study of the practical applications of the knowledge of God to the right development of the individual and to the progressive transformation of human society into the kingdom of God. Here is the basis of the several departments of theological study recognized in the schools. They may seem too scholastic, complicated, and far-reaching to be compatible with "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 3). But it is evident, on a moment's thought, that they are merely the different lines of investigation of what may be known of God through the various lines of the divine action in which he has revealed himself and is evermore revealing himself to men. Since God has given us a revelation of himself so grand and varied, we greatly dishonor him if, so far as we have opportunity, we do not use diligence to ascertain its meaning and its practical applications.

In our theological investigation religion with its spontaneous beliefs is presupposed. In the investigations of theological doctrine to ascertain what we know of God as revealed, we presuppose also, as already ascertained in our investigations in

Fundamental Theology, the existence of God and the reality of his revelation of himself in the various lines of divine action already mentioned, and pre-eminently in the reality of his revelation of himself in his action in human history developing his kingdom and culminating in Christ and the Holy Spirit, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, as recorded in the Bible; and continued through all generations in the Holy Spirit. At this point in the progress of our investigations we are not atheists nor disbelievers, but Christian theists. We are to become as little children in order to enter into the kingdom of God (Matth. xviii. 3). In the same spirit, with teachableness and openness of mind and willing trustfulness in the divine teaching and leading, we seek to ascertain what God is, what we are and may become in our relations to God, what are our duties and privileges as related to him and our consequent duties to our fellow-men, and what hopes of promoting their perfection and well-being we are justified in cherishing. At the same time, I am sure that the right presentation of what we know of God and of man through God's various revelations of himself, and pre-eminently through his revelation of himself in Christ, both commends itself to man's reason, and meets his moral and spiritual needs. The results of God's revelation of himself in Christ, rightly apprehended and applied in the development of spiritual life, meeting man's spiritual needs and promoting the progress of man through all the ages since Christ, are decisive proof of the reality of the revelation as the true revelation of God.

Here we meet the objection that religion is not theology, it is life. But life manifests itself in intellectual action as really as in the feelings and in the determinations of the will directing and exerting the energies. And the intellectual apprehension of reality stimulates and guides in every sphere of human action as really as in religion. The danger, therefore, is not in the exercise of the intellect respecting God and his revelations of himself, but in the misuse of it. The danger is twofold. One tendency is to regard truth with merely a speculative interest, dissociating it from its practical applications to conduct and the formation of character. Another tendency is to push inquiries beyond the scope and limits of the human mind, or to insist disproportionately on the remoter and minor ramifications of thought. In former times these tendencies have been obtrusive in theological

thought. In studying the history of the Christian church we are saddened at the waste of intellectual and spiritual power in controversies on such questions, and often the insistence of each party on the acceptance of its peculiar ramification of doctrine or ritual as a condition of Christian fellowship. In the present reaction from them are indications that thought is swinging to the opposite extreme. The present demand for religious life seems to call for life excluding theological truth, instead of life enlightened, quickened, and guided by it. It seems to overlook the necessity of carefully ascertaining the truth respecting God as he has revealed himself, which is essential alike to the quickening and guiding of right spiritual life.

Froude says: "Thus the religion of Christ was exchanged for the Christian religion. God gave the gospel; the father of lies invented theology." [1] Sentiments of similar import, though not always expressed with the same rudeness, have appeared in popular magazines and newspapers, and have been uttered by Christian ministers. The demand is for "religion," "the Bible," "the gospel," without theology. Therefore I am constrained to devote this first chapter to the consideration of the real significance and practical importance of theological doctrine or doctrinal theology.

I. We must define doctrinal theology in its true significance in distinction from misconceptions on which the objection is founded.

1. The objection as often presented implies that theological doctrine is essentially dogma and inseparably connected with bigotry and intolerance. The first requisite, therefore, is to define the words. Truth is the correct statement of the intellectual apprehension of reality, whether the reality be a being, a fact, or a rational principle, law, or ideal. Doctrine is what a person believes and teaches as truth. Dogma is a doctrine, not only held for true, but authoritatively declared as true and the belief of it to be enforced by penalties for disbelief; therefore to be believed in unquestioning obedience to authority and not after free inquiry and conviction in the light of reasonable evidence. Such was the requirement of the church of Rome before the

[1] History of England, vol. ix. pp. 304, 305.

Reformation; and this belief on authority without investigation was commended as faith.

In the history of the Christian church dogmas have been thus imposed with the assumption of authority. The spirit of dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance has sometimes shown itself even among those who disclaim the infallible authority of the church. It is therefore legitimate to expose and rebuke the error; but not in so doing to identify theological doctrine with dogma, bigotry, and intolerance.

The object investigated in theological study is not dogmas, nor doctrines, nor even truths, but God himself in his relation to the universe and pre-eminently to man; and the universe and man in their relation to God. The special object of the distinctively Christian theology is "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." So Paul declared, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

It is therefore the object of theology to attain the fullest possible knowledge of God through his various lines of revelation, and of the universe and of man as related to him. Though dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance have been at times historical facts in the history of the church, they are no parts of theology. Christian theology does not consist of dogmas declared by authority and enforced by penalties for non-conformity. It consists of doctrines expressing the convictions of prayerful and thoughtful minds, to be received on evidence according as they are found to accord with the principles, laws, and ideals of reason, and with the revelation of God through Christ, the apostles, and prophets, as recorded in the Bible, and to meet the demands of the spiritual life. Theology, therefore, has no essential connection with bigotry, dogmatism, and intolerance. Truth is not responsible for the mistakes and errors of those who seek it. Comte, in his "Politique Positive," presented a scheme of social organization under the reign of complete Positivism. A committee of *savans* were to determine what should be believed as scientific knowledge in every sphere of human thought. Whoever should refuse to believe any declaration of this committee must be subjected to pains and penalties, and be no longer tolerated in the community. Hence Professor Huxley described this scheme of polity as Romanism with the religion left out. But we should not be justified, on account of Comte's error, in identifying all

science with dogma, and characterizing all scientists as bigoted and intolerant.

If the doctrines which express the beliefs of men thus attained by prayerful and earnest investigation are to be identified with dogmas, it would logically imply that all earnest conviction, propagation, and defence of any truth are inseparable from the spirit of dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance. It would consign all the great reformers, and all who have died as martyrs in maintenance of truth, to the category of bigoted and intolerant dogmatists. It would be incompatible with the recognition of man as a rational person; or, if he is such, it would logically imply that the Christian religion, and in fact any religion, will not bear the scrutiny of human reason. It even implies that the real knowledge of any truth by man is impossible; that all the action of the human intellect can attain no more than a Perhaps, and that we are not justified in holding any doctrine as truth with such full conviction as to devote our energies to its defence and propagation. The total result of all the activity of the human intellect would be written in an interrogation point. It is also in contradiction to the fact evident through all history that all ages of reformation and progress have been ages of intense conviction and heroic faith. It is impossible to divorce life from intellectual belief; and this, when expressed in words, is doctrine. As Phillips Brooks says, "No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity, can seize and hold the conscience."

It is sometimes said that any creed of a church is a dogmatic assertion of authority to command belief. But a creed is simply a statement of doctrines held for true by persons united in an association for a specified purpose. A church declares the Christian belief of its members; that is, it declares itself to be a Christian church. The one essential criterion of Christian fellowship in the church is credible evidence of Christian character and life. Doctrinal belief constitutes a part of such criterion only so far as it is essential to Christian character. But the simplest possible statement of what Christian experience and character are, involves a very considerable amount of Christian doctrine. It involves, for example, belief in God and knowledge of what he is and of his relations to man, the possibility of trusting and obeying him, obtaining his favor, communing with him in worship, the Christian law of love, and many other Christian doctrines. Recognition of

common belief and purpose is essential in every voluntary association, and none are admitted who do not concur in the principles and objects of the association. No one ever supposes that in so doing the association acts in the spirit of dogmatism, bigotry, and intolerance.

No more is the church subject to this reproach for exercising the same right. If it may not exercise this right, then it cannot recognize any doctrine or character distinctively and essentially characteristic of a Christian, nor the kingdom of God as characteristically distinct from the world that lieth in wickedness. Then no persons may unite in any association as Christians, and no Christian church may exist. Then, because man is naturally an organizer and cannot attain his normal development and power in isolated individuality, Christians, forbidden to unite in any distinctively Christian organization, are not allowed to attain their full development in Christian character and their greatest efficiency in Christian work.

It must also be remembered that a church has no authority to punish for wrong belief or for lack of credible evidence of Christian character. A church has the power of the keys, — that is, the right to admit to Christian fellowship or to exclude from it (Matth. xvi. 19), — but it has not the power of the sword. The State has the power of the sword, but not the power of the keys (Rom. xiii. 4). The State has no right to determine the question of Christian fellowship, or to control the church in so doing.

2. Theology is also charged with wasting mental energy in endless definitions and distinctions, in pushing inquiry beyond the limits of the human mind, and in discussing needless questions of metaphysics and casuistry. It is a fact that instances of this have often been found in the history of thought on theological doctrines. But it is an abuse of theological thought, not its legitimate use nor the result of its essential tendency. Perhaps the most remarkable example of it in history is the literalism and casuistry of the Jewish rabbis. Their studies in casuistry and their hair-splitting reasoning about words made the study of the law exceedingly intricate and difficult. Edersheim says: "Terrible as it may sound, it is certainly the teaching of Rabbinism that God occupies so many hours every day in the study of the law. . . . It speaks of the Almighty occupying himself by day with the study of the Old Testament scriptures, and by night with

that of the six tractates of the Mishna." He says that a teacher named Rabbah attained so great a reputation as an interpreter of the law, that, when a discussion on purity had arisen in the heavenly academy, Rabbah was summoned from the earth to attest the correctness of God's opinion on the question under discussion.[1] The inference naturally followed that the highest possible merit was attained in the study of the Halacha, the record of rabbinical discussions and decisions in the interpretation of the law. Devoting themselves to this line of study, with its endlessly ramifying definitions and distinctions, they became interested and absorbed in it, so as even to imagine that it constituted the employment and blessedness of the saints in heaven, and of God himself. Their minds became so microscopic that they were unable to appreciate the greatness of God and the grandeur of his service, and of the character developed in the life of universal love. Hence the contemptuous saying of the Pharisees, "This multitude (crowd, populace) that know not the law are accursed" (John vii. 49).

Another result of this word-mongering of the Jewish rabbis was that, in the intricacy of quibbling questions of casuistry, the law in its essence was lost from sight. In building their hedge about the law they hid the law of love itself and made it inaccessible and ineffectual within the thorny hedge. A rabbi, being asked by one of his pupils, Which is the great commandment in the law? replied, "The law of tassels. So do I esteem this law that once, when, ascending a ladder, I chanced to tread on the fringe of my garment, I would not move from the spot till the rent was repaired." Thus the rabbinical literalism belittled the law, obscured or entirely hid its essential significance as the law of love to God and man, and frittered its requirement into the blinding dust of external conventionalisms and mannerisms, instead of the life of righteousness and good-will manifested in loving trust in God and works of loving service to God and man.

A similar tendency has sometimes appeared in various forms in the Christian church. It has appeared as a tendency to undue inquisitiveness into the mysteries of God; and to excessive definition and explication in answering all questions which ramify in every direction and as far as thought can reach, and into the utmost fineness into which thought can be split or attenuated, and

[1] Edersheim, "Life of Christ," vol. i. pp. 144, 106, 93.

serving no purpose but to illustrate the infinite divisibility of thought. This reached its most remarkable manifestation in the scholasticism of the middle ages, with its entities, quiddities, relativities, formal causes, Johannities and Petreities. Of this Erasmus writes, "Theology is the mother of sciences. . . . Theology itself I reverence and have always reverenced. I am speaking merely of the theologasters of our own time. . . . Let us have done with theological refinements. There is an excuse for the fathers, because the heretics forced them to define particular points; but every definition is a misfortune; and for us to persevere in the same way is sheer folly. . . . Necessity first brought articles upon us, and ever since we have refined and refined till Christianity has become a thing of words and creeds. Articles increase, sincerity vanishes; contention grows hot and charity grows cold. Then comes in the civil power with stake and gallows, and men are forced to profess what they do not believe, to pretend to love what in fact they hate, and to say they understand what in fact has no meaning to them." He refers to the legend of Epimenides that, getting lost, he wandered into a cave. There seating himself, and biting his nails and thinking of his many definitions and distinctions, he fell asleep and slept forty-seven years. Erasmus adds, "Happy Epimenides, that he waked at last! Some divines never wake at all, and fancy themselves most alive when their slumber is deepest." [1] In the time of Alexander of Hales, the *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, also called *Fons Vitae*, it was debated whether the angels had a higher degree of intelligence early in the morning or late in the evening. "Gulielmus Parisiensis found on computation that there are 44,435,556 devils." "John Weir, a physician of Cleves, published in 1576 a volume of some 1,000 folio pages. He makes 72 princes of devils, with 7,405,926 subjects." [2]

But all this was an abuse of theological thought. It is no argument against its use in prayerful and careful investigation of what can be known of God in the varied lines of his revelation of himself. The erroneous theology of the middle ages is no more an argument against theology than the medieval astrology is an argument against modern astronomy or the medieval alchemy against modern chemistry. It did not pass without censure even

[1] Ep. to Colet, and Ep. 81, 85.

[2] James Mew, "Nineteenth Century," November, 1891, p. 727.

at the time. Bernard of Clairvaux said of Abelard, in rebuke of his rationalistic inquisitiveness, that "he thrust his head into heaven and scrutinized the deep things of God." Another saint says that he saw in a dream or vision an honored Doctor of Theology with a measuring line in his hand trying to ascertain the exact height and width of the gate of heaven. Another rebukes some theologians of his time for their refined definitions of the eternal generation of the Son of God, "quasi ipsi obstetricaverint." The Reformation was in part a protest against the word-weariness engendered by such scholastic discussions. But even in the reformed churches the tendency to excessive refinement in definition and in answer to needless questions has not entirely ceased. But its continuance, though with abated force, is no reason for any valid argument against theology. It is not a tendency essential to theology; but is merely incidental to the limitations of the finite mind. Many theologians deprecate it, and it is gradually passing away in the progress of theological knowledge.

3. Occasion for misconception of theology and objection against it has been given also in the fact that there has appeared in the church a tendency to a false literalism and a disintegrating verbal interpretation. This arises from the error of regarding the Bible as a mere book-revelation, a book of sentences, an arsenal of proof-texts, each dictated by God and declaring a truth or rule of life for all persons in all places and all times. Thus the Bible is disintegrated into texts. It is searched through and through for isolated proof-texts, to be used in proving a doctrine or justifying or enjoining a practice. Irenaeus rebukes this tendency and compares this atomistic use of proof-texts to the breaking-up of the mosaic of a king made with jewels by a skilful artist, and forming, by rearranging the jewels, the image of a dog or fox, and then trying to persuade men that this miserable likeness is the true image of the king, by pointing to the jewels as real jewels.[1] This has been accompanied with a tendency to use each text in its literal meaning, isolated from its connection, as a universal truth or law. Sisinnius, a bishop of the Novatians in Constantinople, was in the habit of wearing white garments. On a visit to Arsacius he was asked why he wore a garment so unsuitable for a bishop, and where it was required in the Bible. He replied,

[1] Against Heresies, Book I. chap. viii. 1.

"Solomon is my authority, whose command is, 'Let thy garments be always white' (Eccles. ix. 8); and at the transfiguration our Saviour's garments were white as the light."[1] An instance of disintegrating literalism is related by Dr. James Freeman Clarke in 1869: "In the evening I went to a church and heard a discourse on, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The preacher argued that Solomon must have known the circulation of blood, and hence the Bible was inspired. He said also that Job must have known that the solar system is moving toward the Pleiades when he said, 'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?'"[2] Cardinal Newman in his earlier life seemed inclined to a similar literalism. Before he united with the Catholic Church he appears to have regarded a life of celibacy as obligatory. He inferred this from the words of Paul (1 Cor. vii.). In this chapter Paul fully approves marriage. But because it was a time of persecution and distress he expresses the opinion that "by reason of the present distress" it is well for a Christian to remain unmarried; he explicitly says that on this point he has no commandment from the Lord, but simply gives his own judgment. But Newman insisted that this is a rule for all and for all time. He said, "If the present distress does not denote the ordinary state of the church, the New Testament is scarcely written for us, but must be remodelled before it can apply." Interpretations like these are of the same type with a rabbinical interpretation of the words of a psalm, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord" (Ps. cxxx. 1); "therefore it is good to pray from a low place, not from a high place."

This tendency to disintegrate the Bible into isolated texts manifests itself also in the impression that some distinctively evangelical and spiritual instruction must be found in every isolated verse. Rev. Dr. Ewer says: "Who is that of whom it is said, 'Lo, we heard of the same at Ephrata and found it in the wood,' but He of whom the shepherds heard at Bethlehem-Ephrata, and whom all sinners find on the wood of the Holy Cross? And what were those two sticks which the widow of Zarephath gathered on which to bake her bread but the two

[1] Socrates, "Ecclesiastical History," Book vi. chap. xxii.

[2] His Life, by E. E. Hale.

[3] Dr. Edwin A. Abbott, in "Contemporary Review," Jan. 1891, p. 45.

beams of the Cross on which was prepared the Bread of Life?"[1] A little book has been published entitled, "The Gospel in the Book of Esther." The author speaks of it as "This precious story of grace in this little book of God." The interpretation given is that Haman represents the devil, and the letters which he sent to all the provinces conveying the sentence of death on all the Jews denote the condemnation and death which have come upon all men through sin, which "Satan introduced." Mordecai represents faith active and energizing; Esther represents "the state into which one is brought by faith," though with all the race under sentence of death.[2] If interpretations like these are admissible any allegorizing is admissible.

In interpreting the Bible we are not to seek for a double sense, a deeper meaning hidden under the legitimate significance of the words. Underlying all interpretation of the Bible should be the maxim of the great Jewish writer Maimonides (A. D. 1135–1204), "The law speaks in the language of the children of men." And Thomas Aquinas said, "All meanings of Scripture are founded on the one literal meaning, from which alone argument can be drawn; but argument cannot be drawn from allegorical interpretations."[3]

It is also true that underlying all interpretation of the Bible should be the recognition of the fact that the Bible is the record of God's historical action through many ages redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom until the coming of God in Christ and the development of the kingdom into Christ's spiritual and universal kingdom. Even when the historical character of the revelation is acknowledged, the tendency to disintegrate is often seen. The significance of the life of an individual, or of an event or series of events in the national history of Israel, is

[1] Four Conferences on the operation of the Holy Spirit, delivered at Newark, N. J., and repeated by request in Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn, by Rev. F. C. Ewer, S. T. D., 1880, pp. 43, 44.

[2] This type of interpretation by the uneducated is exemplified in an anecdote related by a distinguished clergyman of South Carolina. Before slavery was abolished a negro preached on this text in the Song of Solomon: "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." He reminded his hearers that they all knew that a turtle never sings. The noise it makes is when it plunges into the water. Therefore, he explained, the text means that a blessed time is coming when all over our country people will be baptized by being plunged into the water.

[3] Summa Theologiae, I., Quaest. I, Article x.

found only in the influence of a good example, or a warning against wickedness in the history of evil-doers. The interpreter overlooks the fact, patent in every book of the Bible, that the history recorded is primarily the history of God's action progressive through the ages in the redemption of men from sin and the development of his kingdom. Thus he overlooks the unity and continuity of the divine action and the significance of particular events in their relation to this unity and continuity of divine action and revelation. So doing, the interpreter simply scratches the shell without even seeing the living seed germinating and ripening within it. So the old maxim is fulfilled, "Qui haeret in litera haeret in cortice." There must indeed be the careful investigation of the particular facts and prophecies recorded. There must be also the study of every fact of the history, of every prophecy, of every didactic and preceptive passage, in its relations to the whole revelation in its continuity and unity. We must have regard to the literary character of the Bible. It contains history and biography, didactic and preceptive teachings, proverbs, poetry, rhetorical figures, parables and fables, peculiar national and oriental coloring of thought, symbols and types, apocalyptic imagery, inspired prophecy. The interpreter must take note of these peculiarities. And they are to be interpreted according to the reasonable principles and laws of interpreting language. But always regard must be had to the fact that the Bible is the record of God's progressive action through the ages developing his kingdom, and each part must be considered in its relation to the whole progressive revelation. Here the old principle of interpretation from "the analogy of faith" reappears with a new meaning. It is not that we are to interpret particular texts in accordance with the established creed of the church; but we obtain light on the meaning of a particular passage by considering its place and significance in the progressive revelation as a whole. It is what has been called "the trend of the Scriptures." And familiarity with the Bible is not so much holding many separate texts in the memory and facility in citing them, as it is familiarity with the historical course of God's action in the development of his kingdom, and experience of the truth of that revelation of God in guiding and quickening the spiritual life. Thus the Scriptures come to be held in solution in the spiritual life. We know them as the bread and water of life, by

which we spiritually live and grow and work; as the light of the Sun of Righteousness, at once enlightening, guiding, and quickening the spiritual life. And we are always to remember that by disintegrating the Bible into texts, and by scholastic and hair-splitting definitions and distinctions supported by isolated proof-texts, we may construct a hedge about God's revelation as obstructive as the rabbinical hedge about the law; and so may substitute the letter which killeth for the Spirit that giveth life, and make the word of God of no effect through the traditions of men.

It follows that the ultimate appeal is through the Bible to the God in Christ redeeming men from sin and reconciling the world unto himself, as revealed in the divine action recorded in the Bible and in the ever-present Spirit in whom the divine work of reconciliation is continued through all ages. This must be so, because God's revelation of himself is by his historic action, and this has reached its highest form in Christ and the Spirit. God in Christ is the light of the world, the revealer of all truth respecting God. God shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God in Christ is the source of all right spiritual life. He in his earthly life is the pattern and exemplar of all Christian character, life, and work. In him are the great motives inspiring the Christian life. In him are revealed man's likeness to God; the possibility of man's union with God and the way of attaining it; the love of God to men; the duty and privilege of man to exercise love the same in kind with that of God as he has revealed it in Christ. The goal of all right endeavor is to be like Christ and to lead and help all men to the same union with God and likeness to him in love. Thus the ultimate appeal is through the revelation of God recorded in the Bible to God in the living Christ and the ever-present Spirit.

4. Another misconception on which the objection to theology rests is the assertion that theology deals exclusively with abstractions. The whole course of thought in this chapter shows that this is a gross misconception. Our knowledge of God is not worked out solely by subjective processes of thought. It presupposes God's revelation of himself. Theology therefore begins, like all science, in the observation of facts. God's revelation of himself is by his action in the constitution and evolution of the

physical universe; in the constitution and history of man; and pre-eminently in his action redeeming men from sin, and developing his kingdom, recorded in the Bible and continued through all subsequent ages in the Holy Spirit. The sphere of man's observation of facts in attaining the knowledge of God is the whole universe and its evolution from its beginning. Theology also recognizes the three grades of scientific knowledge, — the empirical, the noetic or rationalistic, and the theological.[1] It begins with observing facts. It brings the observed facts into the light of reason to ascertain their causes and laws, their relations to one another, and the unity of all in a reasonable system. It finds their cause and laws, their harmony and unity in a system, only in the recognition of God, the absolute and universal Reason. So, in studying the particular line of God's revelation of himself recorded in the Bible, we begin with the empirical study of the Bible to find out what it is and what it records; we find the record of God's action continued through many centuries, developing his kingdom, and so progressively revealing himself to men. Then studying it in the light of reason we find its significance, progressiveness, harmony, and unity as the revelation of God culminating in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Every science in its sphere discloses God revealing himself to men, and so is tributary to God's revelation of himself in Christ, perpetuated in the Holy Spirit, which is the highest form of his Self-revelation. Thus the sphere of facts on which theology or the knowledge of God rests is nothing less than the universe itself, its constitution and evolution, physical and spiritual.

Besides this, each individual, in the exercise of religion, comes into touch with God, and knows him in personal experience. All worship implies the reality of communion with God. In all the religions of the world men have assumed the reality of personal communion with God. Christ has pre-eminently revealed its reality in the glad tidings that God is graciously seeking man before man seeks God; that whoever in penitential trust yields to the gracious divine influence finds God already knocking at the door and waiting to be gracious, and receives the fulness of his grace. Therefore, theology rests both on the observation of facts and on personal experience. And theology, or the knowledge of God, is corroborated by the testimony of millions, in the course

[1] See "Philosophical Basis of Theism," chap. xiii.

of the ages, who have themselves both found God revealed in the universe and known him in their own personal experience.

Therefore, instead of dealing only with abstractions, theology deals with the fundamental reality of the universe. The range of its observation and investigation of facts extends through the constitution and evolution of the physical universe, and through the constitution and the entire history of man.

II. The effort to ascertain true theological doctrine is accordant with the teaching and spirit of the Bible, to which the objection is in direct contradiction. The utmost diligence in attending to the law and teaching it to children is explicitly and repeatedly enjoined (Deut. vi. 7–9; xi. 18–20). It is spoken of in the Psalms as the object of intense and enthusiastic study: "Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation day and night" (Ps. cxix. 97; Ps. i. 2). Jehovah appeals to the people to examine and judge of the reasonableness of his doings. "Come and let us reason together, saith Jehovah. Are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?" (Isa. i. 18; Ezek. xviii. 29; xxxiii. 17, 20). Christ in his oral teaching was continually correcting the erroneous conceptions of the Scribes and Pharisees as to the coming of the Messiah and the character of his kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount and his farewell address and prayer (Matth. v.–vii.; John xiv.–xvii.) are full of the most important theological instruction respecting the person and work of the Messiah, the true nature of his kingdom, and the real significance of the revelation of God in him. In the Epistles we find a large development of theological truth and its practical applications. We are told that the Christian religion is a "reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). We are exhorted to be "ready always to give an answer to every one who asketh a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. iii. 15). We are commanded, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). In fact, the very conception that God reveals himself by his gracious action, redeeming men from sin, and developing his kingdom by prophetic communications, and in the coming of Christ and the descent of the Spirit, implies that man is to study the revelation, and by the earnest use of his highest powers find out its true significance.

Here it is objected that this revelation supersedes the use of human reason in seeking to know God. As a recent writer put it,

"You must not put your lactometer into the pure milk of God's Word." It is asked, Since God has spoken, what is the need of human philosophizing? Accordingly we find on the one hand a type of theologians who are jealous of human reason and disparage it; as if reason were silenced in the presence of revelation. We find on the other hand a false rationalism which is jealous of revelation and rejects it; as if revelation were silenced in the presence of reason. Both assume that reason and revelation are incompatible and contradictory. But revelation is the revelation of the highest reason to rational man. Man, as rational, must receive and interpret it. Neither is sufficient of itself. Revelation is of reason to reason. It is no revelation except as there is reason to interpret it; it remains unintelligible. Human reason cannot create the historical acts of God in which he reveals himself; it can only interpret them, and make their light the guide of life. If God reveals himself to man, there must be in man powers and susceptibilities adequate to understand and appropriate the revelation and to live by it. God cannot reveal himself to oysters and snails, nor even to horses and dogs; for they have no capacity to understand the revelation or to receive it and appropriate it as the guide of life. God makes no revelation in a magical way, dispensing with the action of the human powers. In every historical revelation he leaves man to interpret it. In every illumination of men's minds by the Divine Spirit, even in the inspiration of prophets and apostles, he respects and employs their rational and moral powers, and through them addresses the rational and moral powers of those to whom the revelation is communicated. It is these powers, in the likeness of God, who is Spirit, which constitute man receptive of divine revelation. As Novalis says: "It takes a God to discern a God." The very fact that God reveals himself to man is the proof and recognition of the exaltation of man's reason and of the necessity of his using it.

Theologians have often depreciated reason in order to exalt revelation. But in so doing they also depreciate revelation as much. The greater the revelation, the greater the mind which can receive it. A man may reveal something of himself to a dog; but he cannot reveal his knowledge of the binomial theorem, nor his knowledge and love of God. A revelation to a dog must be level to the capacities of a dog. God cannot reveal himself so

fully to a child four years old as to a Milton or a Newton. The moral and spiritual character must also be considered. God cannot reveal himself to a Nero or a Heliogabalus as fully as to an Isaiah or a John. The greatness of the revelation is proof of the greatness of the rational person who receives it.

Reason, then, must be used in interpreting, appropriating, and applying the revelation of God in the Bible. And the result must be theology.

III. Theology is essential to the preservation and purity of Christian belief. As the objection to it is incompatible with the teaching and spirit of the revelation of God recorded in the Bible, so also it unsettles the foundation of Christian belief, flouts human reason and opens the way to fanaticism and superstition, and is incompatible with the historical continuity and unity of the revelation of God and of man's progressive knowledge of him.

1. The objection in its essential significance implies that the Christian religion and its claim to be founded on God's revelation of himself will not bear the scrutiny of human reason. It is the tacit confession that the Christian religion rests on no realities the knowledge of which can be expressed in logical propositions, or brought into the unity and harmony of a reasonable system, or into harmony with physical science or true philosophy, or be in any way expressed and vindicated to human intelligence and reason as real knowledge. Sometimes the statement of the objection is an explicit assertion of agnosticism as to God and his relations to the physical universe and to man. "The value of theological science has been and is greatly overestimated. Its value consists chiefly in the fact that it furnishes most palpable evidence of the complete and irremediable impotency of the human mind, however well trained, not only to discover any divine truth whatever by its own exertions, but also to apprehend revealed truth correctly and to reproduce it harmoniously for the building-up of the body of Christ, the one blood-bought church." [1] What, we may ask in passing, is the recognition of "the one blood-bought church," which is "the body of Christ"

[1] "Anti-Higher Criticism," Address by Prof. Ernst F. Stroeter, Ph. D., of Denver Univ., at the Bible Conference, Asbury Park, N. J., Aug. 1893, p. 268.

and is to be built up in the world, but the recognition of several of the most profound doctrines of theology?

2. Theology is necessary to man as a rational person. The objection to all theology is also incompatible with any recognition of man as a rational person. As such he must think, and form opinions on whatever concerns him. This objection to theology implies that a person must not think or attempt to attain any reasonable belief on the most momentous questions pertaining to the highest interest of human life. This is simply impossible. Man must think and seek to attain reasonable beliefs on all subjects that bear on him and his interests. Therefore theology is not only demanded, but is inevitable from the very constitution of the human mind. The demand is for religion without theology. But theology is simply the intellectual apprehension of the primitive data of religion, on which, as realities presented in God's revelation of himself, all religious experience rests. It is the intellectual apprehension of the God whom we worship, of what he is and what are his relations to us and to the universe. It is simply the intellectual apprehension of what we believe in our religion and of the reasons why we believe it. Any truth respecting God, apprehended in its distinctness from and its harmony with other truths, is theology. Every person who utters any definite conviction respecting God, man's duty to him, God's forgiveness of sin, or any proposition whatever respecting God's relation to man or man's relation to God, is uttering theology. Any preaching of "the Bible," or "the gospel," is a preaching of some theological doctrine which the preacher has defined in his own thought and has ascertained to his own satisfaction to be the truth of God. Even if he uses the very words of Scripture, he has in his own mind interpreted their meaning and attained the conviction that the words, as he interprets and applies them, have the authority of God. Thus men construct and speak theology without being aware of it; as Monsieur Jourdain, in Molière's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," was surprised to learn that he had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it. Hence those who denounce theology, in the very act of denouncing it, are wont to present a considerably full theology of their own. What they denounce is not theology, but the theology of other persons which differs from their own. A writer in a popular magazine, who says "the world is sick of theology," and urges the substitution of

the gospel instead, says, "The man who preaches the Gospel preaches a Person; preaches a life and death and resurrection; proclaims the good tidings of a divine message and a divine mission to men; addresses and works upon the higher sentiments; labors for the uprooting of selfishness in the heart of life and the implanting of love as the dominant motive, and labors for the transformation of character." In preaching thus he would preach a considerably full system of Christian theology.

It is evident, therefore, that the objection against theology is equivalent to a demand for the suppression of all thoughtful study of the Bible, and of all endeavors to attain any intelligent, reasonable, and consistent ideas of God, of the universe, and of man as related to him, of immortality, or of any spiritual reality. It rests on the maxim, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion." Fully carried out it would carry us back to barbarism; or beyond, for even in the religion of savages they think out a theological conception of what God is and how he may be served, however fantastic the conception may be. Compliance with the demand for the suppression of theology is simply impossible. Theology is inevitable. From the nature of the human mind man must think of realities which concern him. He will think of God and of his own relations to him.

The alternative, therefore, is not between theology and no theology. It is between a theology, on the one hand, drawn with prayerful, earnest, and rational investigation from the religious experience of the inquirer himself and of all mankind, from all God's revelations of himself in the constitution, evolution, and order of the physical system, in the constitution and history of man, in Christ and the whole line of revelation recorded in the Bible, and in the continued presence and action of the Holy Spirit illuminating and quickening men; and, on the other hand, a theology crude, defective, and false. Such was that of one who said he saw no need of any difficulty in the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was just like a tree divided into three branches. And in reference to the philosophical objection that a cause is nothing but an antecedent, one replied that it is evident to observation that a cause is sometimes not an antecedent at all, as when one is trundling a wheelbarrow the effect goes before the cause. If we are not to have a theology founded on both Christian experience, careful investigation, and reasonable thought, then we shall

either have a theology of the feelings blindly believing in accordance with the strongest impulses and issuing in fanaticism or superstition, or we shall worship a God whom avowedly we do not know and who therefore may be unworthy of the adoration, trust, and service of a rational being, or we shall fall back on an unquestioning and implicit faith in authority, whether of ecclesiastical priests or German critics.[1]

We are therefore under obligation to use all our powers and opportunities with diligence to get clear conceptions of God, so far as he has revealed himself to man. It is but poor respect we show him if we do not use the rational, moral, and spiritual powers and susceptibilities with which he has endowed us to ascertain and understand, and so to prepare ourselves to declare to others, what he has revealed himself to be and to require. And in this very search after God we trace the line beyond which human knowledge cannot penetrate, and there rest with equanimity. We gladly use what God has revealed, not wasting our intellectual energies and resources in trying to define, picture, and comprehend the mysteries of the absolute Being, who must, as absolute, always transcend the finite mind. So Paul prays: "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. iii. 16–19). As Canon Lyddon says: "In no department of human knowledge is haziness deemed a merit; by nothing is an educated mind more distinguished than by the resolute effort to mark the exact frontiers of its knowledge and of its ignorance, to hesitate only when hesitation is necessary, to despair only when knowledge is ascertainably out of reach. Surely on the highest and most momentous of all subjects this same precision may be asked for with reverence and in reason; surely the human mind is not bound to forget its noblest instincts when it approaches the throne and presence of its maker."[2]

> He who made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust (mould) in us unused. — *Hamlet.*

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[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," p. 179.

[2] Some Elements of Religion, p. 25.

3. The objection to theology is also incompatible with the historical continuity and unity of the development of theological knowledge in the progressive development of the kingdom of God on earth. The universe is so vast and complicated that no one person and no one generation can discover all which can be known of it. And because every particular object is related to the universe, acting on its environment as well as acted on by it, no one person or generation can discover all which is knowable about anything. At every point of time man is the "heir of all the ages." He begins where the preceding generation left off, and all the discoveries of all the ages lie open before him to master and use in any line of investigation to which he devotes himself. And if this is true of the knowledge of finite things, much more must it be true of the knowledge of God. Here is the necessity of the historical spirit which appreciates and preserves the knowledge gained in the past, while by further investigation mistakes of the past are corrected, obscurities are removed, and new knowledge is gained. An astronomer or geologist would be considered insane if he should undertake to study those sciences without acquainting himself with the discoveries of the past. And he is equally insane who investigates what God is, and what the universe and the men in it are in their relation to God, with no recognition of what God has revealed and what men have learned respecting God in former generations. We must heed the simple but profoundly significant saying of Burke: "If one would go to any place he must start from where he is." It is said a pigmy on the shoulder of a giant can see farther than the giant. But it is only on condition that he climb upon the giant's shoulder. Lord Bacon says, "We are the true antiquity." But this is true only on condition that we possess ourselves of the wisdom of the ancients and of the significance and fruits of their history. Thus in each generation man comes into possession of "the capitalized experience of the race." But he must take possession of his inheritance and use it, or it will profit him nothing. In addition to this, God's revelation of himself is progressive by his continuous action in the course of human history, disclosing his character and law, redeeming men from sin and advancing on earth his kingdom, the reign of universal good-will regulated by righteousness in accordance with eternal truth and law. In this way also

the knowledge of God is progressively enlarged by the results of his action through the ages. The oak is the revelation of the acorn and the most complete commentary on its significance. And the kingdom of God in its progressive growth through the ages, continued by the action of God redeeming men from sin, transforming human society into itself, and as it will continue to advance till the consummation of redemption, is the most complete commentary on the significance of his revelation of himself in Christ as recorded in the Bible.

The study of theology in this historical spirit develops the historical sense, a sort of immediate insight into the significance and value of opinions. It saves the theologian from the very common mistake of propounding as a new discovery an opinion fully discussed and exploded in a former age. It creates in him a healthy caution in receiving new doctrines. It restrains him from self-confidence and rashness in his speculations. It helps him to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, the permanent from the transient. It quickens him to reverence for the great truths which have been embodied in the confessions and teachings of the church, which have been uttered in its prayers and spiritual songs, which have vitalized the Christian experience and inspired the self-sacrificing love of Christian workers, and have been attested by Christian martyrs and confessors. It turns the theologian away from needless controversies about minor matters and concentrates his attention and interest on the great spiritual realities which concern the practical realization of the Christlike life and the advancement of the kingdom of God. It gives him breadth of view, soundness of judgment, capacity to appreciate the true principles and constituent elements of progress, and so to discriminate between the false and the true, to counsel and guide wisely in the various movements of his time. When the historical spirit is wanting in the study and teaching of theology, the tendency is to isolation in individual subjectivity, in which the individual shuts himself out from the common Christian consciousness of the church and the living growth of Christian experience and theological thought through the ages. E. E. Hale said, in behalf of the Unitarians: "We have stripped off every rag. We have destroyed all the machinery. 'Just as I am without one plea,' but that I am child and thou art father. This is the whole. Take me in thine arms, Father of my life;

in thee I live and move and have my being. To proclaim to the men of to-day religion in this simplicity is the special duty of the Unitarian church." [1] But here, in discarding all theology, he gives us, as is usual in such attempts, a considerably large Body of Divinity. I heard Wendell Phillips say in a public lecture: "In this country we have no institutions. We have come out of them all and stand free with nothing over us but the broad blue firmament." [2] But they who come out from all institutions under the open firmament and strip off every rag are revolutionary Sans-Culottes, who overturn or pull down but never build up. They would expect every one to begin intellectually unhoused, with not so much as a wigwam, and unclothed, *in puris naturalibus* of the savage. All progress then must cease. Each generation, instead of beginning where the preceding left off, must begin where it began. The intellectual labor of the human race would be, like that of Sisyphus in Hades, rolling a stone up a hill which always rolls back to where it started. Knowledge would become a Penelope's web, all which was woven in the day unravelled in the night. This must issue in universal scepticism, in a creed of one article, — the single affirmation of the right to doubt and to ask questions. This isolation in individualism generates self-sufficiency. It substitutes personal infallibility for the infallibility of the church. It prevents all stability of belief. The church is no longer a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid; it is only a wandering tribe of Bedouins, pitching their tents at

[1] Discourse before the Unitarian National Conference at Saratoga, 1876.

[2] Professor Allen in his "Continuity of Religious Thought," gives us a remarkable instance of its discontinuity. He seems to suggest that the church of to-day in its theological thinking should take a leap backward over all which has been accomplished by the western churches and begin its theology and religion anew from the position of the early Greek fathers. This is the more remarkable in view of the facts that the churches of the East failed to repel the advance of Mohammedism, failed to be powers advancing either spiritual Christianity or Christian civilization, and have but poorly preserved their own spiritual life from being lost in formalism. On the contrary, the western churches, in the decay of the Roman empire, the general corruption of society, and the invasion of the barbarians, quickened a new civilization, christianized and civilized the barbarians and the new nations which arose in central and southern Europe, made powers in civilization the ideas of the sacredness of human rights and the worth and brotherhood of man which have been the watchwords of modern social and political progress, and have their missionaries preaching Christ in every continent and on the islands of the sea.

night only to remove them elsewhere in the morning. It precludes all continuity of knowledge with progressive increase. It issues in what Rothe calls Neodoxy, a love of novelty taking the place of the love of the truth. It is divisive, each setting up his own private opinion or his special reform and riding his hobby with as much enthusiasm and elation of spirit as if he knew for certain that he was mounted on one of the apocalyptic horses which John saw issuing forth to the battle of the Lord. In correcting Christian doctrine and purifying Christian life, it rends rather than repairs, it washes away rather than purifies. As Aubrey de Vere makes one of his characters say of another, —

> "In the washing of the dirt
> From off the church, he 'll wash the church to nothing.
> I preached against her sins; there were who said
> I hit them hard. He 'll rend away the rags
> With shreds of flesh adhering."

Against such individualism Dr. Bellows properly protests: "I flatly disown all allegiance to those theories of so-called freedom of thought and inquiry which allow every man's right to assume the ignorance and folly of all his predecessors; to approach all social, political, and religious questions as if he were the first man, or after the order of Melchizedek without father or mother, — approach them as though he had the authority and wisdom and independence of humanity itself, instead of being a mere tendril of that noble and sturdy vine." [1] This is not the position of physical science, nor of philosophy, nor theology,

> "nor any school
> But that where blind and brawling ignorance
> Delivers brawling judgments unashamed
> On all things all day long."

Theology, therefore, must be studied and taught with candor and openness of mind ready to correct mistakes and to welcome the discovery of previously unrecognized meanings and practical applications of the redemption of men from sin by the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. This is in harmony with the historical spirit. It is justified and demanded by history, which is the record of the progressive enlargement and purifying of the knowledge of Christianity and of its applications. It is not

[1] Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith," p. 39.

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truth which is new, but man's discovery of it.[1] And theology is new only so far as man progressively acquires a larger, clearer and more correct knowledge of God and the spiritual world, and of man and human life in their actual relations to these great realities. And this progress does not invalidate the reality of God's redemption of men through Christ and his building up his kingdom on earth, nor of any truth involved therein.[2]

This progressiveness of theological knowledge has been recognized by the Christian church from the beginning. This is seen in the continuous and energetic activity of Christian thought through the ages, seeking to clarify, define and enlarge the knowledge of God; and even in the earnest and honest, but not always wise and good-tempered, controversies as to the true doctrine. "The history of Christian doctrine, a thing hardly conceived of before this century, has now been admitted as an important branch of church history."[3] In studying it a certain progressiveness is also noticeable in the succession of topics which in successive ages have received attention. The first was naturally the calling of the Gentiles and the relation of the Christian church to Judaism; then the person of Christ and the existence of the one only God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in Augustine's time, the doctrine of sin; after Anselm, the atonement; in the Middle Ages, questions like those between the Thomists and the Scotists, having important and far-reaching bearing on theological thought; at the Reformation, justification by faith. While the Christian life of faith and love and the God in Christ reconciling the world to himself have been always central in Christian belief, it seems almost as if a course of investigation had been planned for the church in successive ages, so that the different subjects might be studied as in a regular curriculum. Thus some particular topic is usually found to have been prominent in the thinking of each age, and each generation has the opportunity and is under obligation to contribute something to the healthy progress of the knowledge of God. While we see and lament the imperfections and evils incidental to these discussions, it is evident that through them all the

[1] John Wilkes was asked by a Roman Catholic: "Where was your church before Luther?" He replied: "Where was your face before you washed it this morning?"

[2] "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3.)

[3] The Letter and the Spirit; Bampton Lectures, 1888, by R. E. Bartlett, p. 142.

church has been gradually coming, though with occasional retrogressions incident to all human progress, to a fuller and clearer knowledge of spiritual realities. The orthodoxy of to-day is in advance of the orthodoxy of one hundred years ago. It is more biblical, more reasonable, more closely connected with the practical needs of humanity, more fully declaring that God is love and that his law is the law of love, and better adapted to quicken, enlighten, and develop true spiritual life and Christian work. Theology, as the human apprehension of all spiritual realities, is never complete. This is true in the same sense in which astronomy, as the human apprehension of the stars and planets, as every physical science, is always incomplete. The single sentence "God is love" is so far-reaching and comprehensive in meaning that the study of successive ages and the experience of the life eternal can never at any point of time exhaust its full significance. Theology, therefore, must be studied and taught now in the expectation of "increasing in the knowledge of God." This generation also must contribute something towards unfolding the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in Christ. Even the criticism of the Bible, which alarms so many, directs attention to the truth that God made the revelation of himself recorded in the Bible primarily by progressive historical action among men, culminating in the coming of Christ and the outpouring of the divine Spirit "on all flesh." This criticism of the Bible as thus conceived, when what is true in its results shall be eliminated from the errors, will doubtless enrich our knowledge of the real significance of the biblical revelation. Thus in the future as in the past it will be an ever-strengthening evidence of the divine origin of the Bible that the diligent study of successive ages fails to exhaust the riches of its significance, its power of spiritual inspiration, and its practical adaptation to the needs of human life in all its changing conditions. And because the Spirit of God has been poured out on all flesh to abide with us forever, God is progressively revealing himself in the continued advancement of his kingdom, which is the continual renovation of men into Christians, the gradual incorporation into the laws, institutions and customs of society of the principles and spirit of Christ, and so the gradual transformation of human society into the kingdom of Christ.

This doctrine of the progress of theological doctrine is some-

times strangely misrepresented as being a mere politic adaptation of a creed to the popular taste, irrespective of its truth. De Tocqueville, in a letter to a friend on Progressive Catholicism, in 1854, said: "I share your feelings about the impertinence of Progressive Catholicism. It is detestable, aside from the question of faith. A religion is absolutely true or absolutely false. How can it make progress?" A writer in a recent periodical says: "The facts of theology are, or ought to be, as imperious as the facts of natural science. Unwillingness to believe a thing because it would, if true, be inconvenient or disagreeable, or shock a prejudice, is in all other domains of thought or activity accepted as evidence of unfitness for any serious process of ratiocination, or even for the orderly conduct of life. . . . A creed which simply professes to express popular opinion on certain topics at certain periods, and which is therefore open to change at greater or less intervals to suit the changes in popular taste or feeling, . . . is not the kind of creed on which the great religions of the world were founded and to which the leading churches owe their existence." It never occurs to objectors of this type that every science, in its correction of errors, its discovery of new truth, and its application to the arts of life, is progressive in the same sense in which theology is so, and that in theology, not less than in physical science, the realities with which it deals and the truth and facts already known remain unchanged through all the changes incident to this progress in man's knowledge of them.

IV. Theology is practically necessary to the preservation and purity of Christian character and life in the development of the individual and of the kingdom of Christ.

This is analogous to the relation of all science to the practical conduct and work of life. We do not expect the mass of the people to be scientists. Yet the welfare and progress of the individual and of society depend on science and the progress of scientific discovery. Industrial inventions, their use and applications, depend on mechanics, chemistry, and other physical sciences. The preservation of health and the physical development depend on the science of hygiene. The progress of the individual and of society depends on the sciences of civil polity and jurisprudence, economics, biology, and sociology. The sciences teach the true

ends to be aimed at and the true methods of realizing those ends. It would be just as pertinent to insist on substituting the practical work in these directions for the scientific knowledge which enlightens and guides that work as to insist on substituting the practical work of religion for theological knowledge. Theology is the knowledge of God, and of the universe and of man in their relation to God, attained by careful investigation of all sources of knowledge. It discloses what is the true ideal to be realized in the Christian life, the truths which present the most powerful motives to seek its realization, and the methods most effective to secure its realization in the individual and in society. It guards against fanaticism and superstition; against a dry rationalism which recognizes no God, regards man as sufficient for himself, and issues in abstractions; against attempts to propagate a godless morality and a godless philanthropy; against attempts to renovate society primarily by changing man's outward circumstances and condition instead of renovating the men and women who compose society to the new and higher life of love; against thus disregarding the fundamental principle of human progress enunciated by Christ, Make the tree good and the fruit will be good also (Matth. xii. 33); and against relying for the reformation of society primarily and chiefly on civil law enforced by the Government. I heard a preacher say in the pulpit: "I would rather worship a rainbow than worship a dogma. I would rather worship the sun than be imprisoned in the darkness and coldness of a creed." But neither dogma nor creed is an object of worship. It is, in fact, saying, I would rather worship God than have any knowledge of him. It would be just as pertinent and just as witty (or foolish) to say, I would rather eat wheat than eat a chapter of organic chemistry describing the chemical constituents of the soil needed for its growth; I would rather eat an apple than be imprisoned in the darkness and coldness of a systematic treatise on vegetable physiology. Accordingly Mr. Gladstone says: "Those who take for the burden of their song, 'Respect religion but despise theology,' seem to me just as rational as if a person were to say, 'Admire the trees, the plants, the flowers, the sun, the moon, the stars; but despise botany, and despise astronomy.' Theology is ordered knowledge, representing in the region of the intellect what religion represents in the heart and life." Therefore theology ought always to be studied in its prac-

tical bearing on life. It must not be studied in the love of truth alone, but also in the love of God and man.

Those who declaim against theological doctrine present Christian character and life as its substitute. But right character and life are always determined by unchanging truth and law. Jesus said, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate. For narrow is the gate and straitened the way which leadeth unto life" (Matth. vii. 13, 14). Every way which leadeth unto life, every way leading to good and right practical results, is narrow and strait, exactly defined by the truths which express the realities of the case and therefore are inviolable laws to all who would reach the goal. The way to physical health is narrow and straitened under unalterable sanitary laws. If one would build a house or a bridge he must conform his action to the plan of the architect or engineer, and they in making their plans must conform them to the fixed laws of mechanics, or the structures will be failures. If one would travel across the continent he must acquaint himself with the railroad route, study carefully the time-table and rigidly conform to it. In every enterprise of practical life the way to success is narrow; it is exactly accordant with the truths which express the realities of the case and so are the rigid laws without accordance with which success is impossible. Christ declares that the same is true of the spiritual life: "Narrow is the gate and straitened is the way." The spiritual time-table defines the actual realities of the spiritual world and the narrow and straitened way by which alone it is possible to live the spiritual life and reach its true destination. Theology marks the lines of this narrow road and presents the motives for walking in it; it is simply the intellectual apprehension of the realities of the spiritual world, the historical action of God in his government and redemption of men, the eternal truths, laws, and ideals which condition and regulate the life of love to God and man, and the well-being which it insures. Therefore all attempts to substitute character and life for theology are futile; truth is, and always must be, the guide of life. It is charged as a monstrous error that any belief should be held to be a condition of salvation. But what is salvation but a right spiritual life of love to God and man and the well-being inseparable from it? And how can an intelligent person lead this life unless he has knowledge of God and man, and of himself as related to them, and of what the life of love is? In the same sense belief of truth is

essential to success in every human enterprise. On the other hand, if Christian doctrine is studied with no reference to its practical bearing, it cannot be rightly and fully understood. For Christianity from beginning to end and in every aspect is practical. It is the revelation of the way by which a sinner may return to God and be reunited with him, and so realize the highest possibilities of his being; and of the way in which the constitution and life of human society are to be perfected by the transformation of society into the kingdom of God. Doctrine is vitalized by its practical bearing on life; life is illuminated and the way of its right conduct is shown by doctrine. The two are inseparable. The attempt to separate either from the other issues in fatal error.

For these reasons the study of theology and the teaching of it in the schools, the pulpit, and the press, are fully justified as requisite for the healthy growth of the individual Christian and of the kingdom of Christ.[1]

V. Doctrinal theology is essential to the true and effective preaching of the gospel. Here we meet the demand that ministers must not preach theology but the gospel. Compliance is impossible. Preaching the gospel is preaching what God has revealed in Christ and in his whole work of redemption and reconciliation, and therefore is preaching theology. Now we see also, in view of the practical importance of theological doctrine for the preservation and purity both of Christian belief and of Christian character and life in the development both of the individual and of the kingdom of Christ, that doctrinal preaching is essential for these practical ends. It has no essential tendency to what Ian Maclaren, in the "Bonnie Brier Bush," calls "a promising course of sermons on the contribution of Hegel to Christian theology."

[1] A highly esteemed clergyman, in an address at the anniversary of one of our Divinity Schools, in 1896, is reported as "showing how Christianity was at first a man, then a fact, and that then followed a series of theories about the fact, each more complicated than the one before it, until the emphasis came to be put, not upon ethics, not upon life, but rather upon the acceptance of metaphysical systems of theology. He closed with an appeal for a creed that should embody the golden rule and the brotherhood of man." This would give mere abstract ethics with no recognition of God immanently active in the world, active in constituting and evolving the physical universe, in the moral government of man, in redeeming men from sin and reconciling the world unto himself in Christ and the Holy Spirit, and in the progressive development of his kingdom.

1. A common impression is that a minister of the gospel preaches merely his own thoughts and opinions; that the sermon discloses nothing but the mind of the preacher. O. W. Holmes caricatures a clergyman as writing for an encyclopædia an article on the town in which he is preaching. He represents him as writing, among other things: "There is a good attendance on the preached word." Dr. Holmes adds the sneer, "He means his own sermons." But if there is any such thing as preaching the gospel, the minister is not preaching merely his own subjective opinions, nor even the truth considered abstractly. He is preaching Christ, and God's gracious redemption of men, reconciling the world unto himself through and in him. He is unveiling to the people the present God, his law and his love, the great realities of the spiritual world, and calling on them to "look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." He "negotiates between God and man."

The preacher may have created prejudice against theology by using in the pulpit the method of the school, substituting logical analysis for the synthetic and concrete presentation of the living God and the realities of the spiritual world. He may have addressed himself to the logical understanding too exclusively, and discussed doctrines as if they had no bearing on the life and work, the sorrows and joys, the hopes and fears, of men. He may have made the sermon an end, not a means. In his polemics he sometimes gives undue prominence and reiteration to his peculiar partisan doctrine, and to assaults on opposing partisans.

But all this is no argument against the value and necessity of theology. To abolish theological doctrine because it is sometimes preached infelicitously, or because it is sometimes held in an acrimonious spirit of intolerance and bigotry, or because it is at some points defective or erroneous, would be, as Professor Huxley once said of a similar unreasonableness on another subject, like "burning the ship to get rid of the cockroaches."[1]

[1] Dr. William E. Channing wrote: "Religious books are pre-eminently dull. If we wished to impoverish a man's intellect we could devise few means more effectual than to confine him to what is called a course of theological reading." This is certainly an astonishing utterance. When we consider the theological literature of Christianity from Justin Martyr to Martin Luther, and from Martin Luther to Dr. Channing himself, and especially the richness of the theological literature in the English language and the literary excellence of not a little of it, we must suspect that it was the

2. Nor is it true that theology ought not to be preached in the pulpit, but should be taught only in the schools. The difference between the two is simply as to the mode of presentation, not as to the essence of the doctrine presented. The relation of the theology of the school to that of the pulpit has its analogy in painting and sculpture. The artist must study anatomy. But the details of the "analysis" of the human body under the scalpel of the dissecting-room do not appear in the "synthesis" of the portrait or the statue. Yet they are there and give character to the work of art; as Mr. Ruskin says, "they are the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness." [1] Physical science cannot be taught in a popular lecture in the method in which it is taught in a scientific school. A treatise on chemistry with its symbols and numbers cannot be read intelligently without special instruction. The scholastic description of the astronomical universe by Laplace in the "Mécanique Céleste" is contained in five quarto volumes of mathematics, which only superior mathematicians can read. Yet a popular lecture which is scientifically correct must accord with the conclusions of the profoundest science. And the truth taught does not cease to be science because treated in a popular method. When Mr. Huxley lectured "On a Piece of Chalk," he was teaching the people science, though not in the method of the schools. Ludwig Noiré says that a single line of Goethe's "Faust" is worth more than the abstract statement that this drama presents man imprisoned in the earthly and the finite and his sighing and striving for the infinite. But this is simply saying that the inspiration of genius in a great drama is more impressive than a logical analysis stating its design, plan, and significance. So the religious enthusiasm of the preacher witnessing for God and declaring God's revelation of himself in Christ and the Holy Spirit by which he himself spiritually lives and works, is more impressive than the scholastic and analytic statement of the same truth. Analysis takes to pieces. Synthesis brings all the parts into their living unity. Yet the former is essential to the truth and power of the latter.

Theology is analogous to these. In the schools must be the exegesis and criticism of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, his-

fault of the critic himself. The lean kine of Egypt devoured the fat ones, and yet remained lean and ill-favored as before.

[1] Modern Painters; Preface to Second Ed.

torical investigation, logical comparison and inference, all the processes of careful analysis and scrutiny. The theology here is the same truth of God which glows and warms and vivifies in the pulpit. But it is, as Schleiermacher called it, "cooled lava." It presents in analysis the elements of expressiveness and power which eloquence sets forth in synthesis. The details stand out to view in the analysis. They are merged in the unity of life and power in the synthesis.

Therefore, instead of excluding theology from the pulpit, we must recognize it as essential to the true and effective preaching of the gospel.

3. By the study of theology the preacher ascertains the proper material for preaching, and learns to present it in its true significance, in its right proportion, in its true relations and harmony with other doctrines, and with its legitimate practical application and power. The material of preaching is simply the gospel of Christ itself, apprehended as the true revelation of God, definitely in its particulars, systematically in its unity and harmony as a whole, rationally as commending itself to the approval of reason. If any one proposes to be a preacher of the gospel, it is preposterous for him to attempt it without getting a definite and comprehensive knowledge of what he means to preach. And in his study of doctrinal theology the question which he is to answer is precisely this: As a preacher of the gospel, what do I propose to preach? As a preacher of Christ, what am I to teach the people respecting him, and God's redemption from sin through him, and his kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?

Doctrinal theology is necessary to guide the preacher in distinguishing the doctrines which he is to teach, in preaching God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, from error.

It assists in defining the sphere of Christian preaching, in distinguishing what is pertinent to the Christian pulpit from what should be excluded from it. There is a common distinction between the sacred and the secular or profane. But the Scripture says: "Whether ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all for the glory of God." Every human act and interest is related to God. No truth of thought or interest of practical life is secular or profane in itself. It becomes so only when considered with no reference to its relations to the spiritual and the divine. In

this view every truth and every practical interest of man is within the sphere of the preaching of the gospel. A Christian man's whole life is religion, or the service of God in Christ; and his religion, or service of God, is his whole life. If Paul would know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, it follows that he would know everything in its relation to Christ. But if the Christian preaching of reconciliation is concerned with all truth and all practical interests of life, it is concerned with them only as they belong to the religious life and the service of God, only as they are related to God, to his redemption in Christ and to the interests of his kingdom. The more thorough the Christian preacher's intellectual mastery of the contents of God's revelation of himself, and of the significance, reach, and power of Christian faith and love, the more clear-sighted will be his discernment of what is the preaching of the gospel in its applications to the thinking and practical interests of human life.

Doctrinal theology is also important in giving copiousness, richness and spiritual power to preaching, both as to its subjects and their treatment. A decay of interest in theology reveals itself in a predominance in the pulpit of subjects remotely connected with the gospel and of little spiritual significance. Tholuck wrote to Dr. Pusey: "Our ministers have rid their sermons of doctrine and are preaching on the necessity of taking regular exercise." The following are some of the subjects of sermons which I have recently seen advertised in newspapers to be preached in the pulpit on the succeeding Sunday: "Beelzebub driving his hogs to be drowned;" "Norwalk Island Lighthouse;" "The Midnight Sun;" "Up a Tree;" "Deformed Feet;" "An Apostle's Lost Baggage;" "The Strange Contents of a lost Trunk;" "The Oyster-preacher and the Crab-watchman;" "Future Felicity Foretasted." In the decay of interest in theology, and of theological study, ministers run dry in their preaching and resort to subjects remote from the spiritual truth, or fantastically connected with it, in order to galvanize into action a ghastly semblance of spiritual life.[1] One who devoutly and earnestly studies what is revealed by God in Christ in all

[1] In Evelyn's Diary is this entry: "Feb. 24, 1665. Dr. Fell, canon of Christ's church, preached before the king on Rom. xv. 2; a very formal discourse, and in blank verse, according to his manner; however he is a good man."

his redemptive action in the course of history and in his bringing in his kingdom, when he comes to appreciate the wonderful superiority of Christianity to every other religion, the sublimity of its truths, the wide scope of their application to human life and progress, and their life-giving power, will never be at a loss for a subject, and will prize every opportunity to set forth something of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in Christ.

Doctrinal theology is necessary to insure to the preacher consistency with himself, so that he shall not contradict in one sermon what he has preached in another, and so find himself often obliged to explain or explain away his utterances. It insures a unity, continuity and cumulative power in the preaching from year to year.

It is necessary also to insure its due proportion of attention to every Christian truth, motive and duty. Considering the immense amount which a minister in his preaching must produce, it is not strange if he falls into a rut and his preaching becomes the repetition of a few stock ideas. I knew a pastor of whom one of his parishioners told me that during his whole pastorate of several years he had on every Sunday in one or the other of his two sermons distinctly preached the doctrine of predestination. Mr. Brook, in his "Lives of the Puritans," records of Rev. Wm. Perkins (born 1558): "He used to apply the terrors of the law so directly to the consciences of his hearers that their hearts would often sink under the conviction; and he used to pronounce the word *damn* with so peculiar an emphasis that it left a doleful echo in their hearts a long time after." It indicates something unwholesome in a ministry when it is remembered only by the urgency with which a single doctrine was preached. Mr. Perkins's ministry, however, seems to have been more comprehensive than the sentence quoted would indicate; for his biographer afterwards says: "His sermons were all law and all gospel; he was a rare instance of Boanerges and Barnabas combined." [1]

The study of the Bible as a collection of sentences or isolated texts is an examination of it as it were with a microscope which exaggerates the little and the particular and excludes from the

[1] Vol. ii. p. 130.

field of vision the great and the whole; and the little and trivial occupies the mind as much as the grandest spiritual realities.

To avoid ruts and hobbies, and the magnifying of the little to equality with the great, there is necessity for doctrinal theology resulting from a continued and comprehensive study of the Bible and of all which from all sources may be known of God.

Doctrinal theology is necessary to the preacher in order that his preaching may correspond with the unity and wholeness of Christianity in its scope and range as a power of renovation and life. Because Christian doctrine constitutes a system, every part is in relation to every other part and to the whole. Hence every doctrine, every precept, warning, promise, is driven home in its application by the weight of the whole system. Thus the preacher is no longer a dispenser of isolated texts, but both in spirit and thought is a preacher of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, whatever be the particular topic of discourse. He is not a preacher merely of rules and duties, but of principles and of God's love to man and man's love to God and man. He is not an artisan working on details by rule, but an artist creating ideals and making them real to the thought.

4. Doctrinal theology is necessary to the preacher to inspire and sustain moral earnestness and to insure eloquent and effective speech. Clear and full thought, strong conviction, a fresh, living, and growing faith, belief which has triumphed over doubt, are elements of moral earnestness and power and essential to all eloquence. Haziness, indefiniteness, and doubt, achieve nothing, have no power to convince, persuade, or inspire. True, clear, vigorous thought, strong conviction of truth and right, are essential to eloquence. Eloquence is indeed of the heart. But if speech effervesces in mere flowers of rhetoric, or froths over into mere sentimentalism, sensationalism, and rant, there is no eloquence. There must be clear thought, strong conviction of momentous truth and imperative duty in the soul, if the soul is to burst forth with the fire and force of eloquence.

Theology, therefore, sustains the test of practical utility. We agree with Milton, —

> "That not to know at large of things remote
> From use, obscure and subtle; but to know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the true wisdom."

But certainly nothing lies nearer to us in practical bearing on all the interests of the daily life of man than the true knowledge of God as he has revealed himself to men. The test of the reality of the revelation of God recorded in the Bible is not so much the literary or the higher criticism as it is the sufficiency of the revelation to awaken and satisfy man's spiritual needs, to quicken, inspire and direct his spiritual development and the development of God's kingdom of righteousness and good-will, and to be the moral and spiritual guiding light of humanity through all its progress in science and civilization. And theology is simply our best ascertained knowledge of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, as revealed in all lines of his revelation of himself.

We proceed, therefore, reverently and earnestly, ever seeking and trusting the guidance of the Spirit of God, to ascertain and define what we can know of God from all his varied lines of the revelation of himself, and pre-eminently from his revelation of himself in Christ as recorded in the Bible.

VI. Man's knowledge of God is progressive. This is true of the theological knowledge both of the individual and of Christian people collectively through the successive ages. This fact of the progressiveness of theology should be always borne in mind in ascertaining, defining, and proclaiming theological doctrine.

In the vital growth of the kingdom of God man's knowledge of him is increased, errors are corrected, infelicitous forms of statement are changed, disproportionate emphasis on truths and aspects of truth is adjusted, new conditions of society disclose new significance and new adaptations and practical applications of truth, difficulties are resolved, perplexing questions are answered or outgrown, or definitely set aside as transcending the present limits of our knowledge. Since God reveals himself continuously in the universe, every advance in the knowledge of the universe, whether in the physical or the intellectual and moral sphere, may open to us additional knowledge of God. The Christian religion must take up the most advanced knowledge and the highest thought of every age, and enlighten and vitalize its highest civilization. Christian theology, therefore, must not only be in harmony with the most advanced knowledge and the true progress of man, but must be able to interpret the significance of that advancement, to

disclose its deepest springs and its true motive-forces, and to enlighten and guide it toward the realization of the highest ends. Its office is always prophetic, to witness for God, to declare his law and his love, and to make men conscious of their real relations and obligations to him. Therefore every age must have its own exposition of theology, as it must have its own exposition of astronomy, chemistry, political economy, civil polity, or sociology. Every age, while holding fast all the treasures of God's grace inherited from the past, should contribute something to correct the misapprehensions, relieve the perplexities, and enlarge the knowledge of sincere inquirers after truth, and to convince men in all the rush of life in modern civilization that God in Christ reconciling the world to himself is still the name above every name to whom every knee should bow; and that the essential and fundamental conditions of human well-being are the recognition by men of their dependence on God, their reconciliation to him in the loving trust which opens the heart to seek and receive his grace, and their harmony with him in obeying his law of universal love and working with him in the service of men to save them from sin, ignorance, and suffering, and to advance the kingdom of God on earth. In a time when knowledge in every other department is making so brilliant progress it would be a reproach to the Christian religion if Christian theology, which sets forth the knowledge of God in his relation to man and of man in relation to God which the Christian religion implies, should not avail itself of the advancing knowledge and should contribute nothing to the clearness, correctness, and comprehensiveness of our knowledge of God, and of its true application to the life of the individual and of society.

VII. In the discussion of the successive topics I shall consider the questions of our day so far as they bear on each topic, and to the best of my knowledge and ability shall avail myself of all new and real light bearing on each topic which recent investigation and thought have evoked in any sphere of knowledge and its application to life.

We recognize errors into which theologians have fallen, and the wrong spirit and methods with which they have sometimes prosecuted their investigations. But errors are incidental to the necessary progressiveness of human development and of human

knowledge in every line of inquiry. Availing ourselves of the true and stable acquisitions of the past, and correcting its errors so far as we discover them, we contribute what we can to the true knowledge of God. Man is finite, and for that reason his development and his knowledge must be progressive. We are to be patient under our own doubts and unanswered questions. As J. C. Scaliger said, "It is a part of human wisdom to be willing to be ignorant of some things with equanimity."[1]

We must be patient also with the doubts and mistakes of others who are candid seekers after God. Doubts and mistakes are incidental to a finite mind's progress in knowledge. We must not rashly assail existing beliefs. An error is sometimes so intertwined with Christian belief in the mind of a true Christian that a rude assault on the error may weaken or shatter an important belief which has become incidentally associated with it. We must not take away a lame man's crutch before his lameness is sufficiently cured for him to walk without it. Otherwise he may fall and be worse crippled than before. We must not resort to a surgical operation till the patient has sufficient vitality to bear the shock; nor operate by a rash and unskilled hand, which in removing the excrescence may cut an artery and destroy the life. It is wiser to cherish the truth already believed, and to develop the spiritual life, till the invigorated vitality of itself rejects the error, or at least makes it possible to expose it with reasonable hope that it will be abandoned. We undermine error by educating to a larger and clearer knowledge of the truth, and stimulating to a higher and nobler life, rather than by direct assault on the error. As Ullmann says, "Not fixedness and revolution, but evolution and reform, is the motto for our time." Progress is not usually in straight lines. It is the result of conflicting influences; the movement seems sometimes in one direction, and then in the opposite direction. But the line of movement is a spiral. With whatever seeming reversal of the direction, the movement is always upward. Bengel says, "It is easy for those who are content to live on like the rest of the world to be orthodox. They believe what was believed before them, and never trouble themselves to test it. But when a soul is anxious about the truth, and would deal with it as with a precious jewel, things are not quite so easy. How wrong it is, then, to rush on

[1] De Subtilitate, Ex. 344, sect. 4.

such sensitive souls, to cross-question, gag, and stun them, when we might on the contrary give them liberty of speech, that they may gain confidence and suffer themselves to be led aright." Even God, in his historical work of redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom, proceeds progressively, revealing himself through inspired men, themselves in a process of development, and to men up to the level of their capacity, and so educating and developing them to the capacity for receiving higher revelations. With infinite patience and tenderness through the centuries he respects the limitations of men in their finiteness, and bears with them in their slow progress in attaining and applying the true knowledge of him. Calvin says of the scriptural references to God's hand, his eye, his ear, and other anthropomorphic representations of him, "Who of even the least intellectual acumen does not know that in these forms of expression God uses a sort of baby-talk," adapted to imperfectly developed men, "as nurses are wont to talk to little children." [1]

Theology should be studied and taught in a loving and reverent spirit, recognizing Christian truth and life wherever they have existed, and amid whatever errors. In studying the past we may learn wisdom from its mistakes in doctrine and practice. And when in the past we find defects and mistakes we need not speak of them flippantly and contemptuously, as many do; but lovingly and reverently, as Noah's sons went backwards to cover their father in his drunkenness, that they might not see his shame.

Thought on theological questions, on God and his relation to the universe and to man, and on the universe and man in their relation to God, has never been more widely prevalent nor more intensely earnest than in our own time. It has pertained preeminently to the truth of theism and the reality, nature, and contents of the Christian revelation, and to the application of Christian truth to the development of right character and the right conduct of life in the individual, and to the progressive realization of the Christian ideal of human society, that is, the progressive transformation of human society into the kingdom of God on earth. Whatever results of the investigations of modern thought in every line of human knowledge have been conclusively

[1] "Quis enim vel parum ingeniosus non intelligit Deum ita nobiscum, ceu nutrices solent cum infantibus, quodammodo balbutire?" — Institut., Liber I., cap. xiii., 1.

established must be recognized in the study and teaching of theological doctrine. My own conviction is that this remarkable movement of thought is tending to results favorable both to the confirmation of the truth of theism and of Christianity and to a clearer and more comprehensive knowledge of their significance and their practical application and power.

We therefore enter on the study of theological doctrine with humility and reverence, but also with courage and hope. We have the record of God's revelation of himself in the Bible. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). The Spirit of God abides with us, as Christ promised, "to take of mine and show it unto you; he will guide you into all the truth" (John xvi. 13, 14). His promise is to us, as it was to Peter, "What thou knowest not now thou shalt understand hereafter" (John xiii. 7). Our path is to be "as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). And we hope to walk this ever-brightening path till we so come into the presence of the Lord and into union with him that "his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they shall need no light of lamp, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God shall give them light. The glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. xxii. 3–5; xxi. 23).

If God has revealed himself, man would renounce his own reason if he did not bestir himself to ascertain what God is in his relation to the universe as thus revealed and what the universe is in its relation to God, the harmony of what is revealed with the principles of reason and with all knowledge, and its adaptation to the practical needs of man. All knowledge is sacred as immediately or remotely connected with the knowledge of God. Had we minds comprehensive enough, we could trace all knowledge up to theology and theology outward to all knowledge. We could show the relations and harmony of theology with all facts of science as being all one harmonious revelation of God, the different pipes of one organ through which are breathing the different parts of one eternal harmony. What is revealed to faith is also to be included in the system of reason. Men may say what they will of philosophizing about the Christian revela-

tion; but it is a necessity of the human mind to philosophize. Nothing less than the extinction of rationality can prevent it. It is the work of reason bestirring itself to build within its own domain a sanctuary for the revelation that has descended to it from heaven; building the great hewn stones, the cedar wood, the gold and silver and fine twined linen of its own gathering and workmanship, into a temple for this heaven-born truth. That work will yet be done. Every stone and beam, every plate of gold and every gem, every hanging and hook and flower of reason's treasures, shall be fitly adjusted around the Holy of Holies of God's revelation, its defence and ornament. Not the profound truths of philosophy alone, but the facts and laws and systems of all science shall be built into the temple, as columns that support or ornaments that beautify it; the inventions of art shall be laid as the tongs and flesh-hooks on its altar, and reason shall minister reverently as its high priest.

CHAPTER II

GOD THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT: MISCONCEPTIONS OF HIS REVELATION OF HIMSELF AS SUCH

The designation of God as the Absolute Spirit indicates the two essential aspects of the one indivisible and only God. One of these aspects is his transcendence of man and the universe as the Absolute Being, unconditioned and unlimited by any power or condition independent of himself. The other is that he is rational Spirit energizing in the universe. Therefore man is in the likeness of God as rational spirit and is capable of knowing him so far as he has revealed himself. God is rational Spirit in the form of the absolute. Man is rational spirit in the form of the finite. In the chapters in the First Part of this volume we aim to ascertain what God is in these two aspects of his being so far as he has revealed himself. This must be the beginning of all efforts to attain the knowledge of theological truth; because the idea which one forms of God determines his whole theological thinking, his conception of man and the universe in their relation to God, and the type of his religious life.

In this chapter I propose to correct certain misconceptions as to God's revelation of himself. It has been a common impression that the supernatural and divine is something foreign from the universe and incompatible with its order and law; that it can reveal itself among men only by abrupt irruption into the fixed course of the universe, interrupting its continuity, uniformity and law. Hence has arisen the conception of an impassable chasm between science and revelation, issuing in the denial of all revelation of God as incompatible with science and the order of nature. Christian believers themselves have been conscious of difficulty in believing in a revelation involving the miraculous and the supernatural. This disbelief, skepticism, and doubt arise, in part at least, from various misconceptions. These it is important to correct at the outset.

I. Revelation, Belief, Reason. — The knowledge of God originates in spontaneous belief. The belief presupposes God's action revealing himself to rational persons. It is verified and developed into rational knowledge by intellectual investigation of the various lines of God's revelation of himself, and of what he is as thus revealed in his relation to the universe, and especially to man, and of what the universe and man are in their relation to God.

1. The knowledge of God originates in spontaneous belief. It is a common misconception that man finds God only at the end of his intellectual processes in investigating the so-called proofs of God's existence. Hence it is objected that we attain only a speculative and subjective idea of a God, without objective reality, not in contact with man in his actual life, not a power active in man's development. The fact is just the contrary. God is so present and active in the life and history of man that the idea of God and the belief in his existence arise, not at the end of these intellectual processes, but spontaneously before these processes begin, and are the occasion of man's beginning them. Man is so constituted and environed that the knowledge of God and communion with him are essential to his right knowledge of himself and of his environment, and to his normal development. Therefore, when he wakes to consciousness of the outward world and of himself he finds himself in the presence of God. The idea of a Divinity and the belief that the Divinity exists arise spontaneously in his consciousness. This spontaneous belief is often called faith. But because in the Bible and in speaking of the religious life faith denotes trust in God, which of course presupposes belief that God exists, it is better to use the word *belief*, and so avoid a common ambiguity. This spontaneous belief is the occasion of the waking of the intellect to ascertain whether there is reasonable evidence that a Divinity exists, and what can be known of him. This intellectual investigation verifies the belief in a Divinity, corrects errors, and enlarges the knowledge of him. This is true in all religions. In the childhood of the race primitive men may have made little effort to verify the belief in a Divinity or to define what the Divinity is. So far as they have done so, they may have used imagination rather than the reasoning power and have reached inadequate conclusions. Yet the belief in a God is spontaneous in all religions; and it is in important particulars

verified, and is also clarified, corrected, and developed, by the larger knowledge and clearer thinking of men as they have advanced in knowledge and civilization. Thus man's knowledge of God begins in spontaneous unelaborated belief; and this belief is verified and man's knowledge of God corrected and enlarged by thought and investigation under the guidance of the principles and laws of reason. This is true of man's belief in God and his knowledge of him as the absolute Spirit, in both these aspects of his being.

This is true of man's belief in God and knowledge of him as the absolute Being. In the religions of the world the Divinity is always spontaneously felt to be a power transcending man and the universe, a mysterious Being contemplated with awe. A savage does not attain a philosophical conception of the absolute and name it. But he feels its transcendence and is awed by it. As man advances in development and civilization, this spontaneous consciousness of an absolute and transcendent Being continues in all religions. For example, Lao-tse, founder of the second religion in China, says:

> "There is an infinite being, that existed before heaven or earth.
> How calm it is, how free!
> It lives alone, it changes not.
> It moves everywhere, but it never suffers.
> We may look on it as a mother of the universe.
> I, I know not its name." [1]

Rev. George Owen, of Pekin, China, writes in the "Chronicle of the London Missionary Society": "The old Chinese classics show a wonderful knowledge of God. There are passages in those classics about God worthy to stand side by side with kindred passages in the Old Testament. The fathers and founders of the Chinese races appear to have been monotheists. They believed in an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God, the moral governor of the world and the impartial judge of man." F. Max Müller has shown that the one God, under the same name, *Dyaus*, was recognized in India, Greece, Italy, and Germany.[2] The Babylonian legends represent that in the creation

[1] Quoted by Charles H. S. Davis, "The Egyptian Book of the Dead," Introduction, p. 6.

[2] Science of Religion, Lect. III.

the gods were created first. They were regarded as gods presiding over and revealed in the various powers and greater objects of nature. In recognizing them as created, these legends necessarily imply an absolute power transcending all these nature-gods and bringing them into being. Something like this is more or less clearly implied in the worship of nature-gods in all the polytheistic religions.

The same principle holds true of man's knowledge of God, in the second aspect of his being, as Spirit; the idea of God as Spirit and the belief in his existence as such precede the intellectual process of verification and definition. In all religions man spontaneously believes that the divinity whom he worships is an intelligent personal Spirit, that he is himself dependent on the divinity, can come into communication with him in worship, can gain his favor by service rendered to him and incur punishment for displeasing him; and with rare, if any, exceptions, even in the lower stages of development, he associates his religion with morality and believes that the God whom he worships punishes wrongdoers and favors those who do right. In the lower stages of development his conception of the Divinity as Spirit may be imperfect, yet it is always the conception of the god as an intelligent personal being, whatever the form in which he conceives him when he comes to him in worship. Thus he finds the divinity as personal Spirit in his spontaneous religious beliefs, before he enters on the intellectual processes of reflective thought in which he seeks reasonable grounds justifying his belief and ascertains more fully what the divinity is and what are his relations to man and the universe. This is true of man in his highest development and civilization as really as in the lower stages of his development.

2. The spontaneous belief in God presupposes God's action revealing himself to men.

The knowledge of God is not attained by pure speculative thinking, but presupposes God's own action revealing himself to men. This dependence of our knowledge of God, the absolute Spirit, on his action revealing himself, is analogous to physical science and to all knowledge. Man is waked to consciousness of the outward world and of himself only by the action of the outward world upon him. He can know the outward world only as it reveals itself to him by acting on him through his sensorium and

as he extends his knowledge of it, beyond what has been thus revealed to him under his observation, by reasoning on the data thus given. So, in close analogy with the method of physical science, we seek to ascertain what God is by tracing out the revelation which he has made of himself in various lines and in reasoning on the facts thus ascertained.

God's action revealing himself precedes man's spontaneous belief and his ratiocinated knowledge of him. This is analogous to man's knowledge of the physical world. The outward world first acts on him through his sensorium; then he reacts on it and perceives it. Thus man has knowledge of his physical environment as it reveals itself to him, and of himself as thus environed. So God acts in the various lines in which he reveals himself as rational Spirit to man, and the spirit of man reacts and perceives God. Thus man knows God as his spiritual environment, and himself as environed by God. No finite mind can acquire real knowledge of any outward object by mere subjective thinking. The perceiving and thinking must be preceded by some action of the object revealing itself. God alone has absolute knowledge independent of any environment.

3. The spontaneous belief in God is defined, verified, and developed by intellectual investigation in the light of reason of the facts and realities in which we find God revealed in the various lines of his revelation of himself, ascertaining their significance, relations, and unity, and their harmony with the truths, laws, and ideals of reason.

First, rational investigation confirms the spontaneous belief in God as the absolute Being. When, haunted by the mystery of the transcendent absolute Being, man brings it into the light of reason, he finds it demanded by reason not less than by religion. When we know that the universe exists, it is a necessary principle of reason that some absolute Being exists unconditioned by any power or reality independent of itself, the Being that the universe depends on for its existence and that is manifested or revealed in the creation and evolution of the universe. Something cannot be originated from nothing. An absolute beginning of being, or power, out of nothing is impossible.

This accords with the history of human thought. The existence of an absolute Being is implied, if not definitely apprehended, in spontaneous belief in the religions of all races. It is

recognized as known in a necessary principle of reason in the philosophy of Greece and Rome, as well as in oriental Brahmanism and Buddhism. At the present day materialists, pantheists, and Spencerian agnostics agree with the theist in affirming that some absolute Being must exist. It is denied only by extreme positivists, who equally deny that man can have knowledge of any real being and teach that all human knowledge is only of subjective appearances or phenomena; that is, that all man's alleged knowledge is only of illusions. As man advances in development and civilization, the belief that the absolute Being exists is found to be, not only the spontaneous and unelaborated belief in all religions, but also to be scientifically and philosophically true. It is a necessary, self-evident principle of reason that some absolute or unconditioned Being exists. It is equally a necessary principle of reason that only one absolute Being can exist. The supposition that there may be two is absurd. If contemporaneous, each would condition and limit the other; if existing one after the other, each would be limited and conditioned in time as well as by the other. Thus neither could be the absolute Being, but each would be finite and conditioned.

When the existence of the absolute Being is acknowledged, the question arises whether the universe itself may not be the absolute Being. The answer is given in the so-called Cosmological argument. This is simply the evidence that the universe is conditioned and limited in space and time, is composed of parts, is dependent and ever changing, and therefore cannot be the absolute Being. For this conclusion the evidence is decisive.[1] The objection to the argument as invalid rests on the mistake that it is designed to prove the existence of an absolute Being merely by reasoning from effect to cause, which can never carry us beyond the series of finite causes and effects. That the absolute Being exists is a self-evident principle of reason.

Here it is objected that, if so, it gives only a necessary subjective idea of reason, but not an objectively real absolute Being. The reply is that all necessary principles of reason present themselves in consciousness only on occasion of knowing some being in experience. The law of continuity that every beginning or change has a cause, and the law of uniformity that the same combination of causes will always produce the same effect, on

[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," chap. xi.

which all physical science rests, are themselves self-evident, unprovable principles of reason as really as is the belief in the existence of the absolute Being. But we become conscious of them as true only on observing some beginning or change in being. Thus in their very essence they carry the knowledge of being in its objective reality. The same is true of the principle that some absolute Being must exist. It arises on occasion of our knowledge of being in its objective reality and carries that knowledge in it as really as do the laws of continuity and uniformity. If this gives only a subjective idea without objective reality, the same must be true of the laws of continuity and uniformity and of all the necessary principles of reason which regulate all human thinking and on which all science rests; and the assumed knowledge, in observation and experience, of being in its objective reality, on occasion of which these principles assert themselves in consciousness, would be equally unreal, all human knowledge would be empty of objective content, and the whole universe only a subjective illusion like the Hindu Maia. The knowledge of the absolute Being as objectively real is essential to any rational recognition of the reality of human knowledge and of the actual existence of ourselves and of the world in which we live. The objection is valid only against speculations on the absolute abstracted from being, an adjective without a noun. Such an absolute is a mere zero indicating the vanishing point of human thought. This has often been the error of seemingly profound speculations on the absolute.

The conclusion is inevitable that some absolute Being exists; and that this absolute Being is not the universe itself, but transcends the universe and manifests itself in it. As Spencer says, it is the Power that manifests itself in the universe and wells up in human consciousness.[1]

Secondly, in the process of rational investigation we also find reasonable grounds for our spontaneous belief in God as a rational Spirit, revealed in the constitution, order, and evolution of the universe.

The evidence of this has been called the Physico-theological argument.[2] We have found that the universe is symbolic of

[1] See "The Philosophical Basis of Theism," chap. xii.; "The Self-Revelation of God," chap. viii. ix. x.

[2] The Self-Revelation of God, chap. xii.

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rational truth, ordered under rational law, progressive toward the realization of rational ideals, subservient to rational uses, and existing in the unity and continuity of a reasonable and scientific system. These evidences of the action of rational Spirit are found in innumerable particulars. Evolution shows that they are revealed also in the physical universe as a whole, progressively through successive epochs realizing a rational ideal in accordance with rational law.

It must be added that all science rests on the postulate that the universe is grounded in reason, that it is constituted and has been evolved in accordance with principles of reason the same in kind with human reason. All science assumes that the law of continuity that every beginning or change must have a cause, the law of uniformity that the same combination of causal agencies must always produce the same effect, the principles of mathematics, and other universal principles of human reason, are true throughout all space and all time. If not, astronomy, chemistry, physics, and all other sciences break down and give no real knowledge. Science not only postulates absolute Reason as the ground of the universe, but it reasons on observed facts in accordance with these principles, assuming that they are true everywhere and always; then it finds by further observation that its conclusions from reasoning according to these principles are correct. Thus it both assumes as a postulate and finds by observation that the universe is everywhere constituted and evolved in accordance with the principles of reason the same in kind with human reason. Accordingly it is both the necessary postulate of all science and the actual discovery of all science, so far as it has attained knowledge of the universe, that the universe is grounded in absolute Reason, that reveals itself as such throughout the universe so far as science has explored it, and is in its fundamental principles and constituent elements the same in kind with human reason. Reason thus revealing itself in the constitution and evolution of the universe is God. The whole fabric of human knowledge and of all science rests on the postulate that God, the absolute Spirit, exists and is revealing himself in the universe.

Science is continuously finding that the absolute Being reveals himself in the physical universe as acting always in the light of reason and in accordance with reason whose fundamental principles, laws, and ideals are the same with those which are the

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constituent elements of human reason. Therefore science finds that the absolute Being reveals himself in the physical universe as absolute rational Spirit. Spencer affirms emphatically that the absolute Being is the Power that reveals itself in the universe. It is equally evident that it is the Reason that everywhere reveals itself in the universe. And a rational power is a personal free agent or Spirit. The same is the conclusion of those eminent scientists, Professors Stewart and Tait: "Consider the position into which science has brought us. We are led by scientific logic to an Unseen, and by scientific analogy to the spirituality of the Unseen. In fine, our conclusion is, that the visible universe has been developed by an intelligence resident in the Unseen." [1] If not, then nothing remains whereby to account for the universe but matter and its forces. The absurdity of the supposition of materialism is humorously set forth in an address by Martineau: "Starting as a beggar with scarce a rag to cover its bones, it turns up a prince when large undertakings are wanted, and within an inch of a plenipotentiary. . . . Such extremely clever matter — matter that is up to anything, even to writing "Hamlet," and finding out its own evolution and substituting a molecular plebiscite for a divine monarchy of the world — may fairly be regarded as a little too modest in its disclaimer of attributes of mind." Herbert Spencer himself intimates that the Unknowable Absolute must be named Spirit, if named at all.

The absolute Being also reveals himself as absolute Spirit in the constitution of man.

Man knows himself as personal spirit, self-determining and self-exerting in the light of reason. In him we find a being of a higher order than any physical agent and differing in kind or quality from every such agent. Though as to his body he is connected with the physical system, yet by his spiritual powers and susceptibilities he is above it. Thus he is a super-physical or super-natural being. John Fiske says that, as a result of scientific thinking in accordance with the theory of evolution, "It is not too much to say that the difference between man and all other living creatures, in respect to tractableness, progressiveness, and individuality of character, surpasses all other differences of kind that are known to exist in the universe. . . . I believe it has been fully shown that, so far from degrading humanity or putting

[1] The Unseen Universe, p. 221, 6th Ed.

it on a level with the animal world in general, the doctrine of evolution shows us for the first time how the creation and perfecting of Man is the goal toward which Nature's work has been tending from the first. We can now see clearly that our new knowledge enlarges tenfold the significance of human life and makes it seem more than ever the chief object of Divine care, the consummate fruition of that creative energy which is manifested throughout the knowable universe . . . As we thoroughly grasp the meaning of all this, we see that upon the Darwinian theory it is impossible that any creature zoölogically distinct from Man and superior to him should ever at any future time exist upon the earth." [1] The existence of beings of this highest order implies that the absolute Being is rational Spirit. Otherwise man would be a being of a higher order than the absolute Being; and the latter as an inferior being would not be an adequate cause of the existence of man. Thus man knows that, however the absolute Being may transcend him, that Being must nevertheless be rational, self-determining, self-exertive, self-conscious Spirit, like man himself. They differ, not in essence, but only in the fact that man is spirit in the form of the finite, God is Spirit in the form of the absolute. It follows that no finite being of a higher order than a rational free spirit can ever appear in the universe, because spirit, as spirit, is in the likeness of God himself.

Accordingly, in the normal development of his own being, man finds himself face to face with the absolute Spirit, presented as it were in the background of his own consciousness. In knowing himself as reason, he finds the reason that is eternal and universal revealing itself in the exercise of his own reason; and revealing itself as in its constituent elements like his own. He sees that the necessary principles, laws and ideals of human reason are valid only as they postulate the same principles, laws, and ideals as eternal and of universal validity in the absolute Reason, and so as the principles, laws, and ideals in accordance with which the whole universe is constituted, ordered and evolved.

In knowing himself as free will, within the limits of his own finiteness self-determining and self-exerting, man becomes aware of a law of supreme and universal authority which he is under obligation to obey, and only in conformity with which he can realize his highest perfection and well-being. And this law pre-

[1] The Destiny of Man, pp. 31, 107.

sents itself as of supreme and universal authority. If it is not so, it is not law, and all consciousness of moral obligation and all aspirations to realize ideals of moral and spiritual perfection are illusions. Here again in every exercise of free self-determination, the absolute Spirit reveals himself in the consciousness of man.

In the sphere of feeling, also, man is conscious of himself as weak and finite, as dependent on a higher power, and of aspirations which no earthly good can satisfy, which beat against the bars of the finite, which would soar up to the immortal and the divine. So the Psalmist exclaims, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (xxxiv. 2). Here also the absolute Spirit reveals himself in the constitution and consciousness of man.

Thus on every side man's spirit opens out to God; in every exercise of reason and free will and in all the spiritual and moral susceptibilities, the absolute Spirit reveals himself in the consciousness of man. It is a real and tremendous alternative which is here before us. If the absolute Being is not the absolute eternal Spirit, if man is not like him in the essential elements of spirit, if therefore the absolute Being cannot reveal himself in the consciousness of man, and man cannot know him and cling to him, then human reason sinks into unreason, human science becomes the empty fabric of illusion, human will, shut out from the light of reason, loses its freedom, moral obligation has no significance, aspirations to moral and spiritual perfection are illusions; and man, instead of being in the likeness of God, sinks to the likeness of the brute, and the whole universe is submerged in the morass of materialism and sensuality.

The absolute Being reveals himself as the absolute Spirit, further, in the history of man. In the very constitution of man, as we have seen, the absolute reveals himself as absolute Spirit. Now we find that, as a matter of fact, he has done so in the history of man. Through all human history no agency has been more universal, continuous and powerful in its influence than religion with its spontaneous beliefs. Man in his development always finds himself in the presence of a transcendent and mysterious Power. That Power he pictures to himself as intelligent, a Power on which he is dependent, to whom he can make known his wants and render acceptable service. Man in his normal

development finds himself face to face with God. The best recent authorities in anthropology teach that no race of men has ever been known destitute of religion and belief in some divinity. F. Max Müller says: "The intention of religion, wherever we meet it, is always holy. However imperfect, however childish a religion may be, it always places the human soul in the presence of God. And however childish and imperfect the conception of God may be, it always expresses the highest ideal of perfection which the human soul for the time being can reach and grasp." And underlying even polytheism there is often found belief in one supreme God. "To the general public or vast mass of the population (of Egypt) the religion was a polytheism of a multitudinous and in many respects of a gross character. To the intelligent, the learned, the initiated, it was a system combining strict monotheism with a speculative philosophy on the two great subjects of the nature of God and the destiny of man, which sought to exhaust those deep and unfathomable mysteries." [1]

This action of God throughout human history revealing himself to men, reached its highest form in the coming of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and is continued through all subsequent ages in the Holy Spirit, poured out on all flesh.

The absolute Being, revealed as God the absolute Spirit in the physical universe and in the constitution and history of man, reveals himself as such still further in the redemption of men from sin and the development of his kingdom of universal love, culminating in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and perpetuated in the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the Bible. At this stage of our study of theology, it is unnecessary to examine in detail the biblical teaching on this point. All who have read the Bible, whether they believe or do not believe that it contains the revelation of God, know that it teaches that God is the absolute Spirit.

God reveals himself as absolute Spirit to individuals in their personal experience or consciousness. Man is not left to acquire knowledge of God merely by studying his objective revelation of himself in the universe and in the constitution and history of man, nor even in his action in human history redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom as recorded in the Bible.

[1] C. H. S. Davis, "The Egyptian Book of the Dead," Introduction, p. 40.

Man comes personally into touch with God. In man's normal development from his primitive simplicity he comes, as we have seen, into the presence of the mystery of the absolute Being. All religions, even the rudest, in their very essence imply the belief that man comes into actual communication with the Divinity, offering him acceptable worship and service and praying to him for his favor and help. This contact of God with man is pre-eminently revealed in Christ. In him God comes into humanity, and from him the Holy Spirit is sent into the world as the representative of the God in Christ, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto men, continuing through all ages Christ's work of redemption in its application to individuals, and so developing the kingdom of God. The scriptural representation is that the Spirit stands at the door of every person's heart and knocks. When any one consents to open the door, the Spirit of God enters and dwells in him, illuminating and quickening him in the new spiritual life of universal love. Thus the person has "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John, i. 3.) In his own experience he knows him whom he has trusted, the riches of his grace, his faithfulness to his promises, his sufficiency to help in every time of need. Thus, according to Paul's representation of the Christian, he is strengthened with might by God's spirit in the inner man; Christ dwells in his heart by faith; being rooted and grounded in love he is able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and is filled unto all the fulness of God (Eph. iii. 16–19). There is, therefore, a profound truth in the saying that religion is a matter of experience. The Christian walks with God and is in intimacy with him day by day. Thus he becomes like an ancient prophet, a witness for God, testifying what God has done for his soul (Ps. lxvi. 16). In this sense the prophecy is fulfilled that under the dispensation of the Spirit all Christians will prophesy (Acts ii. 17). Man is conscious of his physical environment in its action on him through his sensorium. He is conscious of God, his spiritual environment, in his action on him through his spiritual susceptibilities.[1]

We now see that the whole universe in its evolution is the continuous revelation of the ever-present and ever-energizing God. In

[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," pp. 231–552.

the scientific investigation of it, as Kepler said, We read God's thoughts after him. As we trace its evolution in the past we find it the record of God's action revealing himself. It is hardly too strong a figure to say with Mr. Reynolds, "The universe is the autobiography of an infinite Spirit."[1] But it is not the autobiography of a life that is ended. It is the record of God's action revealing himself in the past and continuous now and forever in the progressive realization of the divine and archetypal ideal of all wisdom, righteousness and good-will possible in a finite universe including a moral system of finite rational free agents.

4. In spontaneous belief, verified and defined in rational investigation of what God has revealed himself to be in the various lines of his self-revelation, man attains a real knowledge of God, which is progressively clarified and enlarged. Thus, as Paul requires, we may be ever "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10).

Some writers contend that it is impossible to prove that God exists, because to infer God's existence from anything would imply that God's existence depends on that from which it is inferred; that the existence of God thus inferred must be "the necessary and conditioned result of truths, the validity of which — since they are to be accepted as grounds of proof — must be earlier and more fundamental than the reality that is proved by them."[2] Hence it is said that, if we prove that God exists, he is merely a creation of our minds. This confounds a logical process with a process of efficient causation; it identifies a logical dependence of thought with the causal dependence of an effect on the force of an efficient cause. It would imply that, when I infer from seeing a stone moving through the air that some agent has set the stone in motion, the motion of the stone must be earlier and more fundamental than the agent that set it in motion.

The objection probably arises from supposing that the evidence that God exists is merely the person's subjective thinking. There can be no occasion for the objection when we recognize the fact that the process of reasoning presupposes spontaneous belief in God, arising from his revelation of himself; as the process of reasoning in physical science presupposes spontaneous belief in

[1] The Supernatural in Nature, p. 40.

[2] See Lotze, "Microcosmus," Transl. vol. ii. p. 663; Pfleiderer, "Religions-philosophie," pp. 58, 59.

the outward world, arising from the revelation of the outward world and of our own existence as presented in consciousness. This belief does not rest on mere feeling, as Jacobi seems to imply; for that, as Pfleiderer argues, would issue in resolving all knowledge into subjective idealism. On the contrary, it rests also on the additional and momentous fact that man is endowed with reason, which implies in its very essence as reason that its insight is in the light of principles, laws, and ideals which, if true at all, must be principles, laws, and ideals eternal in Reason absolute, unconditioned, and immutable. The going back to something "earlier and more fundamental" than our particular process of thought is going back to Reason itself as fundamental and eternal, in accordance with whose eternal and universal principles, laws, and ideals all science assumes that the universe must be constituted, and then finds by observation that it is thus constituted and evolved. This eternal Reason is God. If man cannot thus attain real knowledge of God, then all human knowledge would be impossible; for the universe would not be grounded in reason, and would not be scientifically constituted and evolved.

Man's spontaneous belief in God is a real knowledge of him as the absolute Spirit. In discussions as to the harmony of faith and reason, of revelation and philosophy, it is often assumed that faith, or spontaneous belief, is not knowledge, that knowledge is attained only as the object of belief is verified and defined. But if the spontaneous belief or perception of realities which reveal themselves is not real knowledge, then thought has no data on which to act, and can never attain the knowledge of reality, but only a mirage of appearances, with no reality either of an object appearing or a subject to whom they appear. The reality presented and spontaneously believed to exist is nebulous and undefined; but it is reality to be verified and defined in thought. Theology, as I have said, presupposes religion and its spontaneous beliefs. Religion is a universal characteristic of humanity, a fundamental fact of momentous importance in all human history. The professed science, that repudiates it and the realities implied in it as not legitimate objects of scientific investigation and knowledge, is itself unscientific. And all religions imply some true, important and abiding beliefs respecting God, the absolute Spirit. The defects and errors are not so much in the spontane-

ous belief in God as revealed, as in the inadequate intellectual apprehension of it. In the progress of thought these errors are corrected, deficiencies are supplemented, and the knowledge of God increased. In this the development of theology is analogous with that of physical science. The sun, moon, and stars; the earth, its minerals, vegetables, and animals; light, heat, electricity, gravitation, and all the forces of nature, have been revealing themselves by their action to the observation of men from the beginning of their existence on earth. Men have observed the phenomena, and spontaneously believed in the reality of the beings and forces thus revealed. They have lived and done work in the light of these spontaneous and unelaborated beliefs. The whole of man's practical life has justified these spontaneous beliefs as valid. Science presupposes this, and proceeds in its investigation to examine, define, and account for the realities thus presented, and, by more careful and exact observation, experiment, and rational thought, to correct misapprehensions, supply defects, and ascertain all that may be known about them. The same is the process in theology. The objects investigated are the realities the consciousness of which is expressed in religion, its spontaneous beliefs, its worship and service. There is no more antagonism between theology and religion than between science and the spontaneous beliefs arising from presentative and rational intuition which always underlie it. Both theology and science assume the reality of this underlying, unelaborated, and spontaneous knowledge, which is sometimes called faith. Therefore Tennyson expresses a true philosophy in his poetical representation: —

> "Cling then to faith.
> She reels not in the storm of warring words;
> She brightens at the clash of Yes and No;
> She sees the best that glimmers through the worst;
> She feels the sun is hid but for a night;
> She spies the summer through the winter's bud;
> She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls;
> She hears the lark within the formless egg:
> She finds the fountain where they wailed 'Mirage.'"

This clinging to faith is no more essential to theology than to astronomy, chemistry, or any other physical science. And, like science, theology arises from the more careful study of the realities presented in the spontaneous beliefs implied in religion and

disclosed in God's various revelations of himself. Thus it corrects the misapprehension of facts and careless inferences from them, supplements deficiencies, and enlarges knowledge.

It may be added that, not only science and theology, but all human knowledge whatsoever, attained by processes of thought, proving, reasoning, arguing, rests for its validity on knowledge given in presentative and rational intuition. This intuitive knowledge cannot be proved, because it is self-evident and nothing more evident can be adduced in proof of it. It is self-evident because the person comes into immediate contact with the outward world, and is at once conscious of it as acting on him through his sensorium and revealing itself to him, and conscious of himself as acted on by it, perceiving it, and in thought apprehending it in the light of universal principles constituent in human reason. This dependence of all reasoning on primitive self-evident knowledge is what Tennyson has in mind when he says: —

> "Thou canst not *prove* that I who speak with thee
> Am not thyself in converse with thyself;
> For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
> Nor yet disproven."

It is not literally true, indeed, that nothing which is worth proving can be proved. The law of gravitation and multitudes of facts of fundamental importance transcend the range of human observation, and are proved by reasoning. He undoubtedly has in mind the truth, though expressing it with poetic license, that nothing can be known as true by reasoning without postulating reality known in immediate self-evident knowledge. This, however, is not a valid objection to the reality of human knowledge. Certainly it is no more an objection to theology than to physical science and to all human knowledge. In fact it is theology alone that gives a reasonable basis for the reality of human knowledge; a reality which all men practically admit and act upon. For the scientist in all his investigations assumes that the principles of reason which regulate his thinking are true throughout the universe; and that in accordance with them the whole universe is constituted, ordered, and evolved. And in all his discoveries he finds it to be a fact that the universe is constituted and ordered in accordance with them. Thus all science rests on the postulate that the universe is the creation of God, the absolute Spirit; that the prin-

ciples of reason, which regulate human thought and are laws to human action, are principles and laws eternal and universal in the absolute Reason, and that, in accordance with them, God, as the absolute Reason, has constituted and evolved the universe; and, investigating the facts, it finds its postulate verified. Therefore the universe is the expression of the archetypal thought of God, progressively realizing in it the highest ideals of perfection and well-being possible in the forms of the finite; and man, endowed with reason in the likeness of the universal Reason in God, is able to read God's thoughts after him as they are progressively expressed in the universe, and thus to have real knowledge both of the universe and of God. It follows also that, as the physical universe is man's physical environment and reveals itself by acting on him, so God is man's spiritual environment, and reveals himself by acting on him both in the experience of the individual and in the constitution and the history of man. And God reveals himself in human history, both in religion meeting the needs of man's moral and spiritual powers and susceptibilities and in man's intellectual development and the progress of his scientific knowledge of the universe and his command of its resources. For every discovery in science and invention in industrial art is an enlargement of our knowledge of God's revelation of himself in the universe.

It is also true that human reason, verifying and defining the realities presented in spontaneous beliefs, gives real knowledge of God and is essential to the true apprehension of the data given in those beliefs. In discussions as to faith and reason in theology those who emphasize the spontaneous belief are wont to depreciate reason. This is a one-sidedness not less fatal than the depreciation of the spontaneous beliefs. Mr. Kidd, in "Social Evolution," teaches that religion rests on the ultra-rational or supra-rational; human reason teaches that a man must act for his own interest, therefore he must be altogether indifferent to the interest of future generations, which can have no bearing on his own welfare; the law of love and the requirement and sanction of religion come from a source entirely beyond human reason and in conflict with it.[1] In a recent article in the "Nineteenth Century" reaffirming his position against his critics he says, "All religion is essentially ultra-rational. No form of belief is capable of func-

[1] Pp. 62, 63, 166, 167, 168, 191, 209, 239, 240, 241, 247, 293, 294.

tioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide sanctions for conduct outside of and superior to reason."

In the "National Review" Mr. Kidd says of Balfour's "Foundations of Belief": "The principal contribution which the book makes to knowledge consists in bringing into view from the side of philosophy the great truth which we are approaching from the side of science, namely, that there is no philosophical creed, as there is no religious creed, which can be harmonized under the supremacy of reason."

Thus in the very effort to defend religion he makes a most deadly assault on it, denying that it is in accord with reason. The revelation of God and true religion resting on it do not contradict nor tend to belittle human reason. On the contrary they recognize it in its highest exaltation. God is the absolute and universal reason. Man as rational is in the likeness of God. However limited his knowledge may be, the principles, laws, and ideals of reason, of which he is conscious as regulative of human thought, character and action, are the same in kind with the principles, laws, and ideals of God, the absolute Reason, in accordance with which he has constituted and is evolving the universe. In human reason shines the light of the eternal Reason, that lighteth every man. The law of self-renouncing love is accordant with human reason. When a rational being knows himself as one person related to God in a rational and moral system, he sees in the light of reason that he has no right to appropriate the universe and all in it as tributary to himself as supreme owner of it, but must respect the rights of others equally with his own and seek his own well-being with equal regard to the well-being of all and in subordination to God, the absolute and supreme Being, who has created the universe and is evolving it in universal goodwill in accordance with the principles and laws of reason and for the realization of its archetypal ideals of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe. Accordingly, in all nations sufficiently advanced to have a literature, the law of love is more or less distinctly recognized.[1] We may well agree with Froebel, "The destiny as well as the vocation of man as an intelligent and rational being is to bring his constitution, that is, the divine in him, to complete consciousness, to vivid recognition, to clear insight, and with free self-determination to bring the action of

[1] See "Philosophical Basis of Theism," pp. 208–224.

his life into accordance with the divine in him; to allow it to act, to manifest itself. . . . The feelings" (manifesting the divine in man) "are presages of the future life; they are the hieroglyphics of the still slumbering inner life; when rightly estimated and understood, they are angels which lead men in and through life, therefore they should not be lost for man, they should not be allowed to pass away into empty vapor and mist."

5. The revelation of God in the coming of Christ and in the continuance of his redeeming energy in the Holy Spirit is reasonable and even antecedently probable as the continuance of his revelation of himself which he had been making in all the ages preceding and the development of that revelation into its highest form; it also commends itself to reason as in itself most worthy of God, and in all its history in the centuries after Christ it has commended itself to reason by its power in the world as most beneficent, worthy and divine. As Jowett says, "The glory of Christianity is not to be as unlike other religions as possible; but to be their perfection and fulfilment." And Renan says, "The world will ever be religious, and Christianity, in a large sense, is religion's last word."[1]

God in all his action creating and evolving the universe is, as it were, coming down from his absoluteness into the finite. The Highest is thus continuously coming down to the lowest to develop it and lift it up. His coming in Christ in "the form of a servant," to redeem men from sin and develop them into the likeness of God in love and to the realization of the highest possibilities of their being, is the continuance of the descending, forthputting, and condescending which characterize all his action from the beginning of the creation.

Objection to God's revelation of himself has arisen in part from the misconception that the Bible is the only revelation of God. To some minds the word "revelation" means simply the Bible, as the only revelation of God. Then the revelation would be something sporadic, exceptional, and abnormal, breaking in from without and interrupting the fixed course of nature and the laws of the universe, without anything in the evolution of the universe or in the history of man analogous to it or giving intimation of its coming. But when we know that God has revealed

[1] "The Future of Religion," in "Studies in Religious History and Criticism," Frothingham's translation, p. 384.

himself, not only in the creation of the universe, but also by his immanent action in it, so that he presents himself in the consciousness of all races of men, the objection loses all its force. Then the revelation in Christ perpetuated in the Holy Spirit becomes one line of God's continuous self-revelation, in which the revelation reaches its highest form. Then, instead of being improbable, incompatible with the whole course of nature, and without analogy or previous intimation in the history of man, it becomes antecedently probable. For if God has been always immanently active in the universe and his revelation of himself has been found in fact to have been ever progressive in the evolution of the universe to successively higher and higher forms of being, it is reasonable to suppose that he will carry it on to the highest form possible in a finite system consistently with his action in perfect wisdom and love. And certainly no higher form of his revelation can be conceived than that of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (2 Cor. v. 19). Then the incarnation in Christ becomes the central fact in the history of this world, for which all that preceded had been preparatory and from which the highest moral and spiritual issues in the realization of his ideal have flowed. God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself becomes the fundamental fact in the development of the world and of man, progressively realizing the grand ideal of the kingdom of God, and the only key to the true philosophy of human history.

We have seen that man's knowledge of God presupposes God's action revealing himself to man, as man's knowledge of the outward world and all physical science presupposes and rests upon the revelation which the outward world makes of itself by its action on him and under his observation. Therefore, even in the intellectual act of knowing God man is in a true sense in contact with him, the touch of God is on him. This does not imply that the man is morally in harmony with God or in spiritual union with him. God's revelation of himself to the mind of man may be received in loving trust and willing service, or in resistance and enmity. The touch of God revealing himself to a man reveals the man in his true attitude toward God. It is like the touch of Ithuriel's spear causing Satan to reveal himself in his true form when, —

> "Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve;
> . . . . . for no falsehood can endure
> Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness."

And so Paul says: "They are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." But it implies that the sources of our knowledge of God are all in God's revelation of himself in its various forms.

We have seen that the whole universe is the revelation of God. Therefore all knowledge of the universe attained by science in every department is a source of knowledge of God as revealed in the universe. Every discovery of science enlarges our knowledge of the universe, and thus of the revelation of God. Every industrial invention enlarges our knowledge of the powers of nature and of resources and agencies provided by God for man's education and development. Our knowledge of God's revelation of himself is enlarged by all the results of psychological investigations as to the constitution of man in intellect, susceptibilities, and free will, of anthropological researches as to the origin, the primitive condition and the development of man, of all the study of human history and of the ethnic religions. The sources of our knowledge of God are in the physical universe as it becomes known to us, from things invisible in their minuteness and revealed only by the microscope, to planets and suns invisible in their distance and revealed only by the telescope; from the ultimate elements discovered by chemistry to systems whose units are worlds, and to all the forces and laws revealed in astronomy and physics; and these sources are also in the moral and spiritual system, in all that is known of man from his undeveloped condition in savagery to his highest civilization, from the feeble to the greatest geniuses, and from the sinful to the noblest characters developed in love like that of Christ. The whole universe and all its beings, powers, and laws, as known in all the sciences, are sources of our knowledge of God.

On the other hand, we have seen that God, as absolute Reason, is the necessary presupposition of all science and of the possibility and reality of human knowledge; that we can find the unity of the universe and of all the sciences which express our knowledge of it only in the recognition of God. Therefore we may say with true significance, that all the sciences of nature and of man

are theological; that is, they open to us revelations of God; and that theology, in its comprehensive meaning, is the science of sciences, the one science to which all others are tributary, in the light of which alone they are known to be true science, and by which alone they can all be brought into unity.

But while setting forth the comprehensiveness of theology, we must never forget that the highest revelation of God is the revelation of the God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, as recorded in the Bible. It is this to which all other revelations are tributary, and which gives unity to all God's revelations, and to the theology or knowledge of God derived from them. Thus Christ is the Lord of life, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. i. 21); he is also above all, the Head, in the sphere of knowledge. In him came into humanity the eternal Logos, "the true light, even the light which lighteth every man." And here from another point of view we see the unity of all science in Christian theology.

Human life in all its conditions and all its activities is related to God. The Christian religion is designed to penetrate human life in all its ramifications, and vitalize it with Christian love, as the blood pervades and vitalizes the human body in every part, so that the point of a cambric needle cannot puncture the skin anywhere without finding it. Hence a Christian is to be religious in every pursuit and every action as really as in worship. Every action and pursuit is lifted up into a service of God, and so ennobled by contact with the divine. Paul says: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). And now we see that all knowledge is related to God and ennobled as the knowledge of God. Thus both in practical life and in the sphere of knowledge the old and sharply-defined distinction between the religious and the secular, the theological and the scientific, passes away.

From this point of view some of the most effective objections against the Christian revelation lose all their force.

An objection is that the ideas of God and the supernatural are unscientific, because they are beyond the sphere of law. But in fact it is only through the recognition of God that all beings and worlds throughout all space can be known to be stable in unity and harmony under the same laws, and that the evolution of the uni-

verse in all time, from the lowest nebulous matter to men and angels and to the full development of the kingdom of God in the life eternal, can be known to be in the unity and harmony of a continuous development, and so accordant with the great scientific laws of continuity and uniformity. God and the supernatural, instead of being beyond the sphere of law, are the eternal seat and source of all law, and all the action of God is in harmony with law. And for this reason the universe is everywhere under law.

Another objection is that the supposed knowledge of God and the supernatural is unscientific because it does not come into continuity with our previous knowledge, but breaks away from it and has no legitimate union with it. But this is not true. Man is himself spiritual, therefore supernatural, and thus in knowing himself he has knowledge of the supernatural. As such he is in the likeness of God, and so his knowledge of God is the legitimate outgrowth of man's existing knowledge. It has been declared that belief in a miracle is "the abdication of science." But even miracles are only higher manifestations of the power of free will over nature; and prophecy is only a higher manifestation of the communion of God with men which all men may experience, and which all Christians do experience. And the revelation of God in Christ redeeming men from sin and establishing his kingdom is only a special line of God's revelation of himself in the physical universe and in the constitution and history of man, and so implies no break in the continuity of the evolution of the universe and of man's knowledge of it.

Another objection is that belief in God's revelation of himself in Christ rests only on a slender thread of historical evidence in doubtful tradition, and in records written many ages ago and of disputed genuineness and authority. But when the Christian begins to investigate the grounds of his belief, he finds that it rests on no such narrow and unstable basis. All the lines of God's revelation of himself in the universe combine to make the ground of his belief broad and deep as the universe, continuous as human history and the evolution of the world, high as the divine and low as the human in the God in Christ, vital and ever-present as our own deepest spiritual experience and our highest consciousness of life, and certain as human science and philosophy, which derive all their certainty from the presupposition of the existence of God.

Professor Tyndall says, "Besides the phenomena which address the senses, there are laws, principles, and processes which do not address the senses at all, but which can be spiritually discerned." Mr. Kidd says, in the article in the "Nineteenth Century" already alluded to, "In religion is found the characteristic feature of human evolution, the essential motive force from which all cosmic progress in society proceeds. . . . The history of Western civilization is in fact simply the natural history of religion." M. Brunetière, a member of the French Academy and Director of the "Revue des Deux Mondes," is the author of an article in a recent number of the Review, in which he adduces facts showing a progress of scientists toward a more hearty recognition of religion as a reality which science cannot annul and must recognize, and a growing perception that the apparent antagonism between science and religion is founded on misconception on both sides, and not on the essential elements of science and religion. He maintains the belief that this will be the attitude of scientists toward religion in the coming century. This is a reasonable expectation. When theologians and scientists attain broader and more profound views of God in his relations to the universe, and of the universe in its relations to God, we may reasonably hope that the conflict between science and Christian theism will cease; that theologians will see that the discoveries of science enlarge our knowledge of God, and scientists will see that the recognition of God, the eternal and universal Reason revealed in the universe, is the very foundation of all scientific knowledge of the universe. Copernicus, Kepler. Newton, Lord Bacon, and many other scientists of former times devoutly recognize God at the beginning and the end of their scientific treatises, and incidentally as they record the processes and results of their investigations. Their devout recognitions of God were reasonable. We may hope that at no very distant time scientists and theologians will rejoice together in seeing the glory of God revealed in every new discovery in science and in every advance in the progressive development of man.

6. In the foregoing line of thought the antinomy of faith and reason, of revelation and true philosophy is dissolved and their harmony is made apparent. It is also made apparent that the antinomy, if not dissolved, issues inevitably in universal skepticism. If religion and the belief in a Divinity cannot be harmonized with reason, man as a rational being must reject them.

But this rejection involves the rejection of all that distinguishes man as rational. Philosophy, by which man seeks to ascertain the reasonableness of his beliefs and the conformity of the universe in its constitution and evolution with rational law, becomes impossible, because the principles on which it depends are not principles of universal and immutable reason, but mere subjective beliefs of individuals. By the supposition no absolute and universal reason exists. It must follow that there can be no supreme and unchangeable moral law, no essential distinction between right and wrong, no rational basis for the universal and supreme law of love. With speculative philosophy and ethics æsthetics is also swept away; there can be no unchanging and universal ideals of the perfect which are standards of æsthetic judgment, and the beautiful is resolved into that which for the moment is agreeable to any individual. There is also no immutable distinction between good and evil determined by the principles, laws, and ideals of reason as worthy of the pursuit and enjoyment of a rational being, and so having true and unchanging worth. Religion also is an illusion; man constituted so that in his normal development he finds himself believing in a God, is therein constituted for superstition and delusion. Here man claims that he will be scientific and confine himself to the empirical observation of facts; but he finds even this to be an illusion. No rational basis for the reality of his knowledge of the outward world and of himself remains. He finds himself obliged to define himself as a mere series of sensations and the outward world as a mere permanent possibility of sensation; the trees, the hills, all outward objects that he sees exist only in the eye of him who sees them. All reasonable basis for the reality of any human knowledge disappears.

> "The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,"

not, will dissolve, but are now "the baseless fabric of a vision."

II. Nature and the Supernatural. — The impression that the supernatural is foreign from the universe and incompatible with its order and law arises in part from a misconception of the distinction between Nature and the Supernatural. This may have arisen from the fact that the word nature is used with differ-

ent meanings. This is a source of confused and erroneous thought in discussing the supernatural.

Nature in one of its meanings denotes the essential characteristics of a being. We speak of the nature of a stone or tree, of a dog, of a man, of God, of a circle. In this sense every being has its peculiar nature. There are as many different natures as there are kinds of beings. If we say a being of a higher nature is supernatural as compared with one of a lower nature, then every kind of being except the very lowest is supernatural and at the same time natural. Thus the word supernatural would be meaningless.

Nature is also used to denote the world in which we live and which is familiar to us, including rational man and irrational beings and the whole physical system. The supernatural would then denote God and any supposed angels, or the spirits of men existing after death, or any supposed rational inhabitants of other worlds. Theologians have very commonly used the word in this sense. This certainly is not a reasonable and helpful, but a confusing distinction; for it recognizes some finite rational beings as supernatural, on the same side of the line with God, and others as shut up in nature. It slumps all human persons into one mass with the impersonal, irrational and material. Man is merged in nature and has no power to rise above it in rational and spiritual self-determination. God is supernatural; man is not. God is on the other side of the line entirely beyond man. Man cannot pass beyond the line to know the supernatural or to obtain any basis in experience for a positive knowledge of God. God thus separated from man, not in degree only, but also in kind or essence, cannot reveal himself to him, and man cannot know God through any revelation of himself which he may make. God's revealing himself in the universe would necessarily be regarded as an abrupt irruption into it, interrupting the regular order of nature and in itself contradictory to science, unreasonable and incredible. This definition of the distinction between nature and the supernatural excludes God and the supernatural from the regular on-going of the universe under law, and also excludes law from the action of God and the supernatural. Mr. Drummond seems to express a similar conception of the distinction, though it is not in harmony with other statements in his own writings: "Of men generally it cannot be said that they are in living con-

tact with that part of their environment which is called the spiritual world. In introducing this new term, the spiritual world, observe we are interpolating a new factor. . . . We call them spiritual because they are beyond us or beyond a part of us. What we have correspondence with, that we call natural; what we have little or no correspondence with, that we call spiritual." [1]

Nature is used in a third meaning to denote the physical universe, including all irrational and impersonal beings. The supernatural would then denote God and all finite rational or spiritual persons. The distinction as thus defined is accordant with the popular, as well as with the literary and philosophical, usage of language; this is evident in the common contrast of Nature and Spirit. I regard it as indicating the true line of demarcation between the Natural and the Supernatural. We cannot change the usage of language and its diverse applications of the same word. But we can define the real distinction as that between the spiritual, rational and personal, and the physical, irrational and impersonal. Then the question whether we shall designate the two classes by the names supernatural and natural becomes a mere question as to the use of words.

If we accept this as the true line of demarcation between nature and the supernatural, then man himself is a supernatural being, on the same side of the line with God and in the likeness of God as rational Spirit. Therefore God can reveal himself to man by his action in the physical universe, in the constitution and history of man, and in his redemption of men from sin and the development of his kingdom, culminating in Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit, and man can receive the revelation and know God as thus revealed. Man can come into communion with God. Thus man comes to know God as the absolute Spirit, in whom reason is eternal and who has constituted the universe and is evolving it in accordance with rational principles and laws and for the realization of rational ideals and ends, the same in kind with those which in human reason are regulative of thought and action. Then the supernatural action of God in the universe and upon and among men revealing himself is not unreasonable nor anywise incompatible with the continuity and uniformity of nature, for its continuity and uniformity are themselves simply the

[1] Natural Law in the Spiritual World, pp. 156, 167.

manifestation or revelation of the principles and laws eternal in the divine reason in accordance with which God has constituted the universe and is evolving it in the progressive realization of the archetypal ideal of his perfect reason. Even when the supernatural manifests itself in what we call a miracle, it is still the action upon nature of rational spirit above it and in accordance with rational principles and laws, and with the constitution and order of the universe in accordance with those principles and laws. Man knows himself as a rational, self-determining power, supernatural, from above nature acting on it and causing effects in the physical system which nature left to itself could never have caused. This action of a supernatural or spiritual power on nature is of the essence of a miracle. It is not a violation of any law of nature, but simply the result of the action on nature of a supernatural or spiritual power in accordance with the laws of nature. We, however, give the name miracle, not to the effects of human power acting on nature from above it, but only to the effects wrought by the action of God, or by a person endowed for the occasion by God with power superhuman as well as supernatural. But the action of such a power producing effects which nature left to itself would not have caused is always as completely accordant with the laws of nature as is human action in using light, heat, gravitation, the elasticity of steam, the pressure of the air, electricity, and other powers of nature, to do work for man.

Therefore the true line of distinction between the supernatural and the natural is that between rational personal spirit and irrational impersonal being. Then the supernatural is not something abnormal and incredible breaking into the order of the universe, but is that in which man himself participates. And the divine is spirit in the likeness of man, capable of being known by man; and communion and union with that divine Spirit is indispensable to the realization of man's own normal development.

III. The Fundamental Reality. — The impression that God's revelation of himself is abnormal and incredible is founded in part on the misconception that matter and its forces are the substantial reality; that spirit is ghostly, shadowy, phantasmic, and unreal. From the positions now established it is evident

that the reality of the universe is primarily and fundamentally in spirit or the supernatural, not in nature or the natural, in the true meaning of the words. Only in recognition of God the absolute Spirit can man discover the secret of the universe, apprehend the power that sustains and acts in it, the scientific laws and order of its evolution, and the reasonable ends for which it exists and is evolved. Only so can man know it factually as scientifically constituted and evolved, or rationally as explicable in harmony with reason, or morally and practically as existing for reasonable ends, or æsthetically as revealing the ideal and the beautiful.

The reality of the universe is primarily and fundamentally in spirit, not in matter and its forces; in the supernatural, not in nature or the physical. God is a Spirit. The energy that acts in the universe, sustaining and evolving it, is put forth into it from God the eternal Spirit. In striking accord with this is the representation in Genesis (i. 2). The universe as first created is represented as formless, motionless and homogeneous, "waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep"; then "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The representation is that the beginning of motion in the formless homogeneous waste was from the action of the Spirit of God, not from the formless waste itself. If it be translated, "The breath of the Lord moved upon the waters," the meaning would be essentially the same. The power that originated motion in the homogeneous and formless waste and that energizes in it through all its evolution, is put into it from God, the eternal Spirit. So it has been from the beginning and will be forevermore. In fact man's own knowledge of power, force, or energy, as distinguished from mere motion, begins in his consciousness of himself as in free will exerting and directing his own energy, and his simultaneous consciousness of the outward objects opposing the energy which he exerts, or in some way acting upon him. In accordance with this it is reasonable to suppose that all force or power originates in God, the eternal Spirit.

This sets aside a common impression that matter with its forces is the substantial reality; that spirit is ghostly, shadowy, phantasmal, and unreal. The very contrary is true. The spiritual or supernatural is the fundamental reality. The spiritual or supernatural is not the manifestation of matter and its forces;

but matter and its forces are manifestations or revelations of the spiritual or supernatural.

When Darwin and Wallace promulgated the theory of evolution, many feared that it with its necessary inferences, if proved true, would make belief in God impossible and triumphantly establish materialism. Some in consternation have tried to make concessions, as if asking to retain belief in God only for their religious hours, without presuming to intrude it into the sphere of science; as if venturing to hope only to canton off a little Goshen in some corner of human life where the divine light may shine, while leaving all beyond in the Egyptian darkness of materialism. This is only raising the cry, *Sauve qui peut*, in the consciousness of defeat. But when the atheist affirms that God and the supernatural are nowhere, the true and only effective reply is, not that God and the supernatural may possibly be somewhere, but that God and the supernatural are everywhere; that they are the fundamental reality of the universe, the basis of all reality in it and of the possibility of scientific knowledge of it, and in fact of any human knowledge; that they are present and essential in the whole process of evolution; and that the universe in its continuous evolution is the continuous revelation of God. The doctrine of evolution itself requires the recognition of God as the absolute Spirit transcending the universe, and presents new and decisive evidence that he is immanently active in it. Skepticism cannot be met effectually by minimizing the supernatural, apologetically trying to show that there may be at least a little of it in the universe; but only by maintaining the truth that it is the fundamental reality of the universe. The universe as a whole and in all its parts is dependent on God for its existence, its powers, its laws and order, its evolution, and its ultimate design.

In this line of thought we are brought back to the truth that the absolute Being is the absolute Spirit, and that spirit is the fundamental reality and the central and pervading energy in the universe. Science teaches the fact that the highest order of being that has come into existence in the protracted evolution of the universe is man. Though through his body he is implanted in the physical, he is endowed with reason, with free will self-determining and self-exerting, and with susceptibility to rational and spiritual motives, emotions and interests; he knows himself to

be under obligation to rise above the sphere of animal instinct, sensual appetite and selfish desire to a life enlightened by reason, regulated in accordance with rational truth and law, and directed to the realization of rational ends; in a word, to the life of universal love. These are the essential characteristics of a personal ego or spirit, as distinguished from all mere animal life. The absolute Being on whom the universe depends must be a being of as high an order as man; that is, he must be a personal spirit. Otherwise the creature would be of a higher order than its creator. And no being of a higher order than personal spirit, that is, than man, who is a personal spirit, can ever exist. For man, as rational, self-determining spirit, is in the likeness of God; and no created being can be of a higher order than God himself. Thus we see that the fundamental reality of the universe is spirit; the highest energy acting in it is the self-determining, self-exerting energy of spirit; and the highest end which can be realized in it is the development of rational personal spirits to their highest perfection and well-being, thus realizing what Christ calls the kingdom of God. This is ever progressing in the finite universe, as a living seed shooting up and growing in the earth and air and all its physical environment, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." As J. R. Lowell says in writing on "The Old English Dramatists," "The real and abiding facts are those which are recognized as such by the soul when it is in that upper chamber of our being which is farthest removed from the senses, and communes with its true self." And Professor Knight says truly, "The question is not, Is there a spiritual realm to which material things may ultimately and in the last analysis belong? It is, Is the whole universe, at its very core and in its inmost essence, spiritual?"[1] "It is spirit that is in man, and it is the inbreathing of the Almighty that giveth him understanding" (Job xxxii. 8). Here is the fundamental scientific truth that it is spirit that manifests itself in the universe and is energizing in it to realize progressively the development and perfection of spiritual personal beings as its highest end. We see, therefore, the utter futility of all objections against the revelation of the supernatural, that is, of the spiritual in the universe as foreign from it, contradictory to the scientific

[1] Prof. William Knight, "Aspects of Theism," p. 11.

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knowledge of it, and incompatible with its continuity, uniformity and law.[1]

John says, "Jesus, knowing that he came forth from God and goeth unto God" (John xiii. 3). In this consciousness of the divine in him what does he do? He washed his disciples' feet. Thus he set forth the reality that the divine in man reveals itself in service rendered in love even in its lowliest acts. Herein he discloses the archetype of the ideally perfect man. Every man comes from God. Every one who lives the life of love in goodwill regulated in righteousness returns to God. To such a person death is only an epoch in his normal development to his highest perfection and his highest condition in communion and union with God in the life everlasting. Man is immortal. In the progress of evolution in the physical system mechanical force is transcended but not abolished by chemical; both are transcended but not abolished by life, vegetable and animal; all are transcended but not abolished by rational life coming from the living God, in whom life is underived and eternal. The ultimate atoms are the indivisible units in the physical system; and not one of them ever ceases to exist. Every physical force is persistent, perpetuated in some form forever. Much more may we expect rational, self-determining persons, who are the indivisible units in the moral or spiritual system and are in the likeness of God, to live forever. In this life God is our spiritual environment, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," and the spiritual

[1] Thou art! directing all, thou art!
Direct my understanding then to thee;
Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart.
Though I am but an atom 'midst immensity,
Still I am something fashioned by thy hand.
I hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth;
On the last verge of mortal being stand,
Close to the realm where angels have their birth,
Just on the boundaries of the spirit-land.
The chain of being is complete in me.
In me is matter's last gradation lost,
And the next step is Spirit, Deity.
I can command the lightning; and am dust!
A monarch and a slave, a worm, a god!
Whence came I here and how, so marvelously
Constructed and conceived? Unknown? This clod
Lives surely through some higher energy;
For from itself alone it could not be. — DERZHAVIN.

is the fundamental reality as really as it will be in the life to come. · Death is an epoch in which the spiritual life in the Christian will be more fully developed and he will come into more vivid consciousness of God and his spiritual environment as the fundamental reality. As Paul says, "Now we see darkly, but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). If a person has lived in sin, death is an epoch terrible indeed. It brings him into vivid consciousness of his antagonism to God, to his own spiritual being and environment, to all that is true, right, perfect, good, and divine, and to the fundamental reality in the constitution and evolution of the universe.

Christian faith, therefore, is the recognition of God and the spiritual as the fundamental reality and acting in trust in it as such; as one recognizes the reality of the material world and spontaneously shapes his action in accordance with the physical realities. Faith brings home to us, as present with us now, God and our spiritual environment, the same fundamental reality which will be more vividly seen in the heavenly glory.

> "Far into distant worlds she pries,
> And brings eternal glories near."

This accords with the scriptural definition, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). Thus Christian faith is the inspiration to earnestness, energy, and heroism in the work of Christian love. It expects great things; it attempts great things. Even in the face of opposition and temporary failure it is not discouraged. So Whittier in his efforts against slavery writes:

> "I have not seen, I may not see,
> My hopes for man take form in fact;
> But God will give the victory
> In due time; in that faith I wait."

Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). This faith inspired Paul. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." And in a Roman dungeon expecting speedy death he wrote: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Cor. iv. 18;

2 Tim. iv. 6–8). His past life was shining on him as faithful and efficient service in Christian love; and opening out into a vista of endless glory.

IV. Transcendence and Immanence. — The impression that God's revelation of himself is foreign from the universe and incompatible with its constitution and law, arises in part from a misconception of God's transcendence of the universe and his immanence in it.

1. It is the one indivisible God, the absolute Spirit, who at once transcends the universe and is immanent and active in it. The words transcendence and immanence do not denote what God is in his essential being, but only his relation to the finite universe.

Here also we find confusion of thought and diversity of opinion arising from lack of agreement and precision in the use of words. A recent writer says that God as Spirit transcends the universe, but as the absolute Being is immanent in it. Others say that God as the absolute Being transcends the universe, and as Spirit he is immanent in it. This same diversity of conception appeared in the discussion of God's transcendence and immanence in the early history of the church, in connection with the Greek philosophy and Neo-Platonism. God, as then distinguished from the merely physical universe and above it as Spirit, has been designated as supercosmic; distinguished from the whole finite universe, including finite rational beings, as above and beyond it as absolute Being, he has been designated as transcendent. In these speculations the tendency is to lose a firm grasp of the unity of God. In attempting to distinguish God's transcendence from his immanence, we must guard against the danger of imagining a division in God himself, instead of a mere distinction in his relation to the universe. The effort to conceive of the Absolute apart from the Spirit, so as to give the full appreciation due to the transcendent greatness of God, has often issued in attaining only empty abstractions, indicating only the ultimate bound or limit of human thought. The Absolute separated from the living divine Spirit becomes a zero, the Hegelian conclusion, "being=o." Basilides, for example, taught that God as Absolute transcends, not only the finite universe, but Being itself; he is beyond all affirmation; nothing can be predicated of him. Still he held that God created the universe; yet, even so, nothing can

be predicated of him declaring what he in his essence is: "God, not being (οὐκ ὤν, θεός), without thought, without perception, without will, without purpose, without passion, without desire, willed to make a world. In saying *willed*, I use the word only because some word is necessary; but I mean without volition, without thought, and without perception; and in saying *world*, I do not mean the extended and divisible world, which afterwards came into being with its capacity of division, but the seed of the world." [1] Plotinus represented God as "beyond the One and higher than the Monad itself," the highest abstraction of the then current philosophy. Centuries before, Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans had resolved the ultimate reality of the universe into the abstract idea of number. As Aristotle says: "The Pythagoreans seem to have looked on number as the principle and, so to speak, the matter of which existences consist. . . . They supposed the elements of number to be the elements of existence, and pronounced the whole heavens to be harmony and number." Philolaus, one of the most distinguished of the Pythagoreans, says: "Number is great and perfect and omnipotent, and the principle and guide of divine and human life."

Thus pushing the distinction between the transcendence and the immanence into a separation, we not only miss the true significance of the distinction, but also lose in empty subjective mental abstractions all knowledge of God himself as an objectively real and living Spirit. Therefore it must be always borne in mind that in distinguishing God's transcendence and immanence we are not defining what he is in the essence of his being, but only his relation to the universe. It is the one indivisible God, the absolute Spirit in each of these relations to the universe; God the one absolute Spirit in his transcendence of the universe, and God the one absolute Spirit in his immanence in it.

2. Even when aiming to hold fast the oneness of God as the absolute Spirit, theologians sometimes isolate the transcendence from the immanence, the absolute from the Spirit, or at least give an undue preponderance to the one or the other.

If the transcendence of God is isolated, or receives disproportional emphasis, the tendency is to exclude God from the universe. The conception springs up that God created the universe in the

[1] ap. Hippol. 7, 21, p. 358. "The seed of the world" seems to be an inchoate intimation of evolution.

six days and finished it; since then he has left it to go of itself. From this point of view the universe comes to be regarded as a mechanism made by an outside artificer. A clock wound up and set agoing was regarded as a sufficient representation of it. This is what has been called by unbelievers at the present day the carpenter theory of the universe. But the universe is not a clock. The theory that the universe is a mere mechanism and every power and movement in it explicable by the laws of mechanics, which had currency from the time of Descartes, has been gradually abandoned by science. In our own day the discovery of evolution has given it its death-blow. Spencer and the evolutionists of his school teach explicitly that the type of the universe in its evolution is not mechanism, but the growth of a living organism.

It is obvious that this mechanical theory of the universe and its artificer outside of it is a serious objection to the reality of the revelation of God. If God's transcendence of the universe is isolated, or occupies the thought predominantly to the exclusion of his immanence, he is conceived of as being, as it were, shut up in his transcending absoluteness, and so any revelation of himself to man in the finite becomes impossible. And if the universe is a mechanism completed and finished by an external artificer, then any additional action of the artificer in the machine would imply a breakage and an interruption of its regular on-going. In fact, it was a mechanical theory of this sort which gave the occasion for the assaults of the Deists of the last century on the reality of the revelation recorded in the Bible, and the plausibility to their objections.

On the contrary, if the immanence of God is isolated or given undue preponderance, the danger is of identifying God with the universe, and so sinking into the morass of pantheism. This is probably the tendency which, of the two, it is now more necessary to guard against.

Here, however, a false alarm may be raised. Pantheism may be so loosely conceived that the true doctrine of the immanence of God in the universe may be thought to be pantheism. Thus one propounding simply this true and important conception of God's immanence may be cried down as a dangerous innovator, and so stigmatized, like a hooking ox, "*Foenum habet in cornu; longe fuge.*"[1] This oscillation of thought in attempting to adjust

[1] Horace, "Satirarum," Lib. I. Sat. iv. 34.

the true conception of God's transcendence and his immanence recurs at different periods in the history of the church. In these periods of transition some, intending to declare only God's immanence, have used language which has been unjustly denounced as implying pantheism. Others, notably some of the medieval mystics, have used language which, if fairly interpreted, implies pantheism.[1] This is a danger against which we need to guard in the present return to a more full recognition of God's immanence. We must maintain the objective reality of the physical universe distinct from God ; and of every rational person or ego in the likeness of God as Spirit, yet distinct from him. The doctrine of God's immanence in the universe cannot be pantheism so long as it recognizes the absolute Being as God, the eternal Spirit, and the universe, physical and spiritual, as having real existence distinct from God, though dependent on him, and every being in the universe as individuated in its own constitution, and acting under the laws of its own being.

In the present reaction from the giving of undue prominence to the transcendence there is apparent a tendency, not unusual in such cases, to swing to the opposite extreme. Some, in setting forth God's immanence, use language which really implies pantheism ; often, probably, without intending to teach it, and in unconsciousness of the real significance of their words. For example, we find Christian writers advocating the need of Christian pantheism. But Christian pantheism is as unthinkable as a square circle. The recognition of God as the absolute personal Spirit, distinct by "the whole breadth of being" from man and the physical universe, is of the essence of Christianity. The identification of Christianity with pantheism is an absurdity. In Professor Edward Caird's "Evolution of Religion," and some of his other writings, it is hardly possible to avoid recognizing distinct Hegelian pantheism. A similar tendency is discernible here and there in theological writings in our own country. As a single example I quote from an article entitled, "Some Criticism of the Andover Movement." As one of the defects of the movement the writer mentions the retaining of the common philosophical idea of personality. "To ascribe to one person, say the reviewers, what belongs to another, is an infringement of personal rights, at least a confusion of personality. This is true if our

[1] See Dr. Hunt, "Pantheism and Christianity."

idea of personality is still dominated by the thought of separate embodiments. We ordinarily think of personality as necessarily exclusive, mine of yours and his and every one's. But in order to understand man's relation to God and all the higher human mutual relations, we must recognize that personality is inclusive. The more truly it is personality, the more does it comprehend all true persons: 'I in thee and thou in me.' This conception is needed to explain the participation by man in the life of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the presence of Christ in the church, all true friendship and marriage, the mutual life of the living and the dead."[1] If God's immanence is consciously or unconsciously confounded with pantheism, no self-revelation of God can be consistently recognized; for there would be no God to reveal himself. And if, without proceeding to this extreme, God's immanence is isolated from his transcendence or emphasized in a one-sided way, the tendency must be to an anthropomorphic conception of God, open to his rebuke, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Psalm l. 21).

3. God's transcendence and his immanence must be held in unison as complemental truths, presenting two aspects of God's relation to the universe.

Here the question may arise how God, while transcending the universe, can be immanently active in it; how we are to comprehend God's transcendence and his immanence without sliding into error on either side. The difficulty in answering this question arises in part from attempting to define God's action too minutely, to picture in the imagination just how God created the universe and is sustaining and developing it; that is, from attempting to transcend the limits of the human mind. When Nicodemus asked, How can these things be? our Lord, anticipating a fundamental principle of the Baconian method, taught him that his first inquiry should be for the facts, and that he should accept these on sufficient evidence, even though unable to answer the question, How can these things be? (John iii. 9–12). The question before us is the question of Nicodemus. At this stage in our investigations we know the facts that God has created the universe and that it continuously depends on him for its being and its evolution. We have also positive knowledge of God revealed in the universe as the absolute Spirit. But we cannot

[1] Andover Review, Feb. 1890, p. 199.

picture in imagination the precise mode of God's action putting forth his power from the absoluteness of his being to energize in the finite and create a universe in the forms of space and time. Mystery necessarily lies all along the line of the transition of the energy of the absolute Being into the finite, revealing himself in creating, sustaining, and evolving a universe under the conditions and limitations of the finite. No finite being ever passed beyond that line between the finite and the absolute, and from that side acted in the finite, and thus acquired in experience data from which to picture just how God puts forth his energy from his absolute being into the finite, creating and evolving the universe in the forms of space and time and under all the conditions of finite existence. We therefore accept the fact that the one absolute Spirit both transcends the universe and is immanently active in it, though we are not able to picture just how it is so. Now we may legitimately ask what, within the limits of the human mind, we can know of this immanent activity of God in the universe.[1]

First, we may consider God's immanent activity in the physical system, or what is called the course of nature. We know from the results of scientific investigation that some cause other than matter and its forces is necessary to account for both the existence of the universe and its order and its evolution. We know also that the existence of God and his agency in the universe are adequate to account for both. In answer to the question we may say, negatively, that the doctrine of God's immanence does not imply that every particle of dust driven in the wind, every drop of spray from the surf dashing on every shore, the motion and action of every atom and molecule of matter, is caused by a direct and distinct volition and exertion of God. This would imply that the universe is only a Hindu Maia, a mere illusion having no real power or being; and would thus undermine the reality of all human knowledge. It is also a purely anthropomorphic conception, assuming that God's action must be limited to finite modes and forms like our own. We are rather to suppose that from him energy is continuously flowing into the physical system, sustaining it in being, and directing its evolution according to its constitution and laws and in the progressive realization of his archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe. This, and this

[1] See "The Philosophical Basis of Theism," pp. 414–428, 510–536.

alone, meets the demand of the fundamental principle of science that the sum of force in the universe, potential and energizing, is never increased or diminished, but is always the same. For we find the absolute source of all power or force forever energizing in the universe, but itself remaining absolute and undiminished. It distributes and individuates its power in the finite, yet remains itself forever the same without increase or diminution. Receiving does not increase it, putting forth and expanding it does not diminish it. This is the fundamental principle of the mathematics of the calculus, which since its discovery has proved so powerful a principle in scientific investigation. Theism shows that it is a principle essential in the very constitution of the universe. The divine energy —

> "Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

The immanent action of God in nature seems to be implied in the common belief of Christians. The church has always held to God's omnipresence. This it has never held as an inactive and impersonal presence, but as the presence of the living and ever-acting God, in his universal providence directing the affairs of the universe, clothing the lily with beauty, feeding the birds, caring for every sparrow that falls, and numbering the hairs of the head. The common belief that God sustains the universe in being implies his continuous energy in thus sustaining it. At whatever point of time we think of the universe, we must think of God as, in the order of thought and fact, antecedent to it as its cause. In a way mysterious to us he individuates his power in the forms of space and time and so creates the universe objectively real and distinct from himself, while it is ever his power that is individuated in it and sustains it as really as on the day of its creation. Thus the energy of God, the eternal Spirit, is evermore flowing into the universe to sustain and evolve it. Science finds in the evolution of the universe epochs in which the necessity of the action of that ever-present and transcendent power becomes apparent to the scientific observer. Such epochs are the beginning of life, the beginning of sensitivity, and pre-eminently the beginning of the existence of rational finite persons, spirits in the likeness of God. This does not imply that God's energy is withdrawn from the physical universe at other times and comes in only on extra-

ordinary occasions; but that on these occasions it becomes more apparent. Thus these occasions constitute epochs in the evolution. Some crude analogy with God's sustaining and developing energy may be found in the sun. According to the nebular hypothesis, the earth with the other planets was thrown off from the mass of nebulous matter of which what is now the sun was the centre. Thus it is distinct and separated from the sun, and all terrestrial beings have their existence and act on one another with their several mechanical, chemical, or vital forces. Yet the earth with all things on it or in it is always dependent on the sun, which holds the planet to itself as its centre of gravity, and is continuously acting on it by its heat and light and its chemical and electric forces, sustaining all terrestrial forces. If the sun should cease thus to act on the earth, all terrestrial life, motion, and energy would cease. So the universe, having its own real existence and acting with its own varied forces is distinct from God. Yet it originated from him. He created it, individuating something of his divine power in it; he is continuously active in it, sustaining it and all in it or on it in being, quickening its energies and directing them in accordance with rational law and in the progressive realization of rational ideals and ends. As in spiritual communion with God we not only think about him, but come into spiritual contact with the divine Spirit shedding heavenly light and breathing divine influences upon us, so in looking on the heavens and the earth and on all the marvelous processes of the physical system we rightly feel ourselves to be in the presence of God continuously revealing himself in them.

Secondly, God is continuously active by his spiritual influences in the moral system. Here we have less difficulty in conceiving of God's immanent activity as consistent with the existence of man in his rational free personality distinct from God, and with the free action of man under the divine influences. We have less difficulty in this conception because we know ourselves as rational free agents and have ourselves experienced the gracious divine influences of the Spirit of God in our own hearts and lives. God is immanently active in the moral system, redeeming men from sin. This redemptive action of God on and among men was not completed and closed centuries ago when Christ's earthly life ended, but is perpetuated through all ages in the Holy Spirit.

In the Spirit he is present and immanently active, bringing on men all the heavenly influences of his redeeming grace which perfect wisdom, righteousness, and good will permit or require, to induce them to turn from selfishness and sin to the life of love, and so to develop his kingdom on earth, and therein progressively to realize his archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being so far as possible in a finite universe and a system of finite free agents.

4. God's immanence and continuous action in the universe, both in the moral system and the physical, is clearly taught throughout the Bible. In reply to those who rebuked him for restoring sight to a blind man on the Sabbath, Jesus said, "My Father worketh even until now," never interrupted by the Sabbath, "and I work" (John v. 17). Paul says, "He is not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28); "God who worketh all things in all" (1 Cor. xii. 6); "who filleth all in all"; "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. i. 23; iv. 6). Some recent writers have said that the religion of Israel emphasized God's transcendence and regarded him as apart from the universe rather than immanently active in it. But these critics cannot be familiar with the Old Testament. Throughout the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament God reveals himself to Israel as their covenant God, known to them as such in his memorial name Jehovah and always in the most intimate relations with them. In their nomadic wanderings his temple was with them, their guide by day, and every night its neighborly light was seen from the encampment. Throughout their history his mercy-seat was in the temple, behind the veil in the Holy of Holies, reminding them always that he is the one only God, the Spirit whom no eye can see, yet always near, accepting the worship of his people and from his mercy-seat caring for their welfare. The whole history is the history of God's dealings with the people. In the Psalms and prophecies we find the expression of the consciousness of God as in the most intimate relations with his worshipers as individuals. Psalm cxxxix. is an example: "Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thy hand upon me." And in the Old Testament the phenomena of nature are habitually referred to the action of God: "Jehovah thundered in the heavens and the Most High

uttered his voice" (Ps. xviii. 13; Ps. civ.). The belief of the Jews in the immanence of God appears also in the Apocryphal writings. For example, the universe is spoken of as God's house in which he dwells: —

> O Israel, how great is the house of God!
> And how large the place of his possession!
> Great, and it hath no end!
> High and immeasurable. — Baruch, chap. iii. 24, 25.

The immanence of God is implied also in the biblical declarations of God's universal providence, extending to the minutest events, already alluded to. It is clearly revealed also in the whole biblical history of God's development of his kingdom on earth, culminating in the Word made flesh and dwelling among us and perpetuated in the Holy Spirit, whom the Son sends from the Father, "poured out on all flesh" (Acts ii. 17), to abide with men forever. And all prayer postulates God's continuous gracious action among men. The door of the closet of secret prayer shuts out the world and opens into the immediate presence of God. This closet is found in every place. Electricity continuously courses unseen in its beneficent work through all nature. Wherever an electrician sets up his battery, he finds and appropriates the unseen energy. So wherever and whenever any person seeks God in humble trust, he finds him and avails himself of his freely-offered grace.

From all these considerations it is evident that God's transcendence of the universe and his immanence in it are not incompatible or contradictory. They are two aspects of one and the same God, the absolute Spirit, two poles of one and the same full-orbed truth. Theism, as the doctrine of God, the absolute Spirit, is necessarily bi-polar. It must recognize God as at once the absolute Being and the personal Spirit, at once transcendent and immanent, distinct from the universe and ever active in it. It is remarkable with what strength the Bible habitually presents each pole of a bi-polar truth, yet holds them both in unity with no suggestion of conflict between them. Thus, for example, it presents God speaking in one and the same sentence of his transcendence and his immanence: "Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place; with him

also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 1, 2).

5. The recognition of the unison of God's transcendence and his immanence is necessary to insure the proper appreciation of God's revelation of himself, the true knowledge of God and the right development of the spiritual life of communion and union with him.

God's transcendence and his immanence being thus in unison, the physical universe is not a dead wall separating us from God and hiding him, but rather the screen on which as in a panorama we in the darkness see him from the intense light behind picturing himself in his cosmic energizing before our eyes. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth the work of his hands" (Ps. xix. 1). There is no place for the argument in defence of monkish orders recently urged in a public address in Boston: "The object has been to keep the law of God more thoroughly than can be done while engaged in the occupations of this world."[1] The universe itself is the temple of God, in which men offer to him the work of their daily lives and all the daily on-going of life in the service of God and man and in loving trust in God, a service with which "God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16). As to the harmony of God's transcendence and immanence in the moral system, redeeming men from sin, in his graciousness to men encompassing, enlightening, and quickening them with divine influences (here as before I take an example from the Old Testament), the Psalmist uses the grandest scenes in the universe as imagery to illustrate it: "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them who fear him." Every time we look up to the firmament, so high, so pure, so all-encompassing, so grand in the glory of the sun by day and of the moon and stars by night, so bending in seeming tenderness over us, every one of us is to think, Such is God's transcending greatness, and such the fulness, beauty and power of his unchanging love, ever encompassing me, beaming and glowing upon me with divine and heavenly influences in the darkest night as well as in the day. And as each one is always directly under the zenith of the firmament and in the centre of the circle of the horizon, so is every one the centre of the love

[1] The Congregationalist, Nov. 29, 1894.

of God. And lest this representation of God's love, like the glorious firmament ever pouring all its glory on each one, should seem too great and overpowering, the Psalmist immediately comes down to our homes and our firesides for more human imagery: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them who fear him" (Ps. ciii. 11–13). And in these wonderful pictures of God's love we see, not only his immanent activity among and on us, but also, in harmony with it, his transcendence, the inexhaustible fulness of his infinite and absolute being, that is never lessened by expending it. This makes it possible that each person may have all the riches of his grace; as each one has all the light and glory of the firmament without taking away aught from any other; as each child has all the undivided fulness of the father's and the mother's love. This is like all God's works. Every blade of grass that grows, every flower that blooms is ministered unto by the sun and the earth, by the ocean, the rivers, and springs which supply rain, dew and moisture, by the atmosphere, by light, heat, and electricity, by gravitation, by physical and chemical forces, by all the cosmic energies; and each has the ministry of all. Thus we see God's transcendence and his immanent agency in every revelation of himself; not only in the evolution of the universe, and its greater cosmic agency, but also in every individual thing that lives or moves.

At times in the history of the Christian religion a tendency has manifested itself to isolate either the transcendence or the immanence; or to positions which would logically imply such isolation, though it may not have been intended. But the common current of Christian belief in all the Christian ages has recognized explicitly or at least has necessarily implied both the transcendence and the immanence and their harmony. For example, Gregory the Great says: "God dwelleth within all things, and without all things, above all things and beneath all things."[1] Thomas Aquinas says: "The immediate operation of the Creator is closer to everything than the operation of any secondary cause."[2] Lord Bacon speaks of "the voice of God revealed in things." Here we see the significance of the title of a volume, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," by Henry Scougal, Professor in the University of St. Andrews more than two hundred years ago, which was still in circulation in the first half of the

[1] Mag. Mor., ii. 12.

[2] Summa Theol., II., Sent. i. 1.

present century. Similar testimony we find in our own time. H. W. Mabie, in his "Literature and the Spiritual Life," says: "Whatever makes the divine element in life more real, credible, evident, by disclosing the range, the depth, the infinite possibilities of that life, contributes as directly to faith as a specific revelation. The essence of religion is the consciousness of God everywhere in the universe. In fact, the ability to receive the specific revelation depends in no small measure on the ability to conceive of human life broadly and nobly. The view of life, or of the world, which limits the presence or the revelation of God to particular activities, is, in the exact measure of such limitation, atheistic." M. de Vogüé, in an article on the "Interpretation of the International Exhibition in Paris in 1889," says: "The laws of the outward universe are but the reflex of the moral world within, and the Universal Force, once adequately distributed into its proper channels, will inspire the human heart for all purposes of life. In this new order of things force must regain its noble ancient name; with us, as with the Romans, it must be called *Virtus*." [1] We have seen that the transcendence and immanence are implied in the mathematical and scientific knowledge of the universe. Both, and their entire harmony, are assumed and implied in all worship and devotion. The same is expressed or implied in the loftiest conceptions of the universe by poetic genius.

"But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impelled
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious Cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect,
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintained,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labor; whose design
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts. . . .

One Spirit — His,
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows —
Rules universal nature. Not a flower

[1] Revue des Deux Mondes.

But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odors and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavor or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please."[1]

The same lofty sentiment and sublime conception live in our contemporary poetry.

"I wander in the thoughtful night
To gaze upon His countless stars,
His eyes of uncreated light
Beam on me through their crystal bars,
And those Eternal eyes I know
Love all who walk with him below.

"I see Him in the burning day,
I feel Him in the viewless air,
In every breath, in every ray
His power is present everywhere;
And in my soul His wonders grow
Of Life, and Love, and Power, below."[2]

Here, then, we see a profound philosophical and theological, as well as practical and devotional, significance in the poetical representation of the music of the spheres. Addison says of the stars, —

"Forever singing as they shine,
'The hand that made us is divine.'"

Clement of Alexandria, referring to the wondrous music attributed by polytheists to some of their gods and to other mythical personages, declares that the God who has revealed himself in Christ has tuned the universe itself to music. "This deathless strain,

[1] Cowper, "The Task," bk. vi.

[2] Helen L. Kilburn-Brown, "Trinity Chimes and Songs of the Unseen," pp. 33, 34.

the support of the whole and the harmony of all, reaching from the centre to the circumference, and from the extremities to the centre, has harmonized this universal frame of things, not according to the Thracian music, but according to the fatherly counsel of God which fired the ardor of David. And he who is of David and yet before him, the Word of God, despising the lyre and harp, which are but lifeless instruments, and having tuned by the Holy Spirit the universe itself and especially man, who, composed both of body and spirit, is himself a universe in miniature, makes melody to God on this instrument of many tones. And to this instrument — I mean man — he sings accordant: 'For thou art my harp, and flute, and temple.'" He adds in explanation, that man is a harp to sound in harmony with the universe the glory of the Lord, a flute through which the holy spirit breathes music, a temple to contain the Lord.[1]

V. The Bible. — Objections of unbelievers arise in part from the misconception that God's revelation of himself consists solely of messages given to inspired prophets to be by them communicated to men, and that the Bible is merely the record of these messages written without error under the direct inspiration of God. This implies that God's revelation of himself does not consist primarily in what he himself does, redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom, but in communicating to them truths and moral and religious precepts through inspired prophets.

1. Some of the difficulties involved in this misconception and the objections arising from it against the reality of God's revelation of himself recorded in the Bible are as follows.

It presents revelation as a mechanical process, incompatible with any reasonable conception of the action in it of either God or man. According to the theory of verbal or mechanical inspiration, which has had some currency in the Christian church, the Bible was regarded as a book of sentences copied word for word from God's dictation, all of equal applicability for all time, and each constituting as to the particular thought expressed a complete and final revelation of divine truth and of the will of God for all time and all conditions. Canon Burgon, writing on "Inspiration and Interpretation," says of the Bible: "Every book

[1] Exhortation to the Heathen, chap. i. His quotation, "For thou art my harp," &c., is probably a line from a hymn then familiar.

of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, — where shall we stop? — every letter of it is the direct utterance of the Most High." In the biography of the late Lord Shaftesbury it is said that he was shocked by the assertion that the book of Chronicles and the gospel of Luke did not stand on the same ground of inspiration; he maintained that "there is no security whatever except in standing on the faith of our fathers and saying that the blessed old book is God's word written, from the very first syllable to the very last and from the last back to the first."[1] An American Doctor of Divinity says: "The Bible itself knows of but one kind of inspiration, and that is an inspiration which extends to every chapter, verse, word, and syllable of the original Scriptures, using the mind and mouth, the heart and hand, of the writers, guiding them in the least particular, guarding them against the least blunder, and making their utterance the very word of God to our souls. . . . The ass on which Balaam rode rebuked the madness of the prophet, for the Lord opened the mouth of the ass and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? Even the higher critics must admit that this is a clear case of verbal inspiration."[2] And if this is so, then the whole Bible might have been communicated through the mouths of asses, or through a telephone or phonograph, as really and as effectively as through the mouths of men. The one would be as mechanical as the other.

From this conception of the Bible, F. W. Newman, in his book entitled "The Soul," argues that the alleged revelation in the Bible is impossible, because men must have ideas of God and of spiritual realities before a revelation of God in words could convey any meaning. From the same misconception of revelation Rousseau and others have urged the same argument against the possibility of a divine revelation, and have thought they had thus struck Christianity its death-blow. This argument hits entirely aside from the mark; for it derives its whole force from a misconception of what God's revelation of himself essentially is. God reveals himself by his historical action in the universe, in the constitution, experience and history of man, in the history of his kingdom in Israel, in the historical person and work of

[1] Vol. iii. p. 7.

[2] "Anti-Higher Criticism," Addresses at a Bible Conference, Asbury Park N. J., Aug. 1893, pp. 334, 349.

Christ, and in the continued presence and action of his Spirit. Thus men have the idea and the knowledge of God and are capable of receiving personal communications from him of truth, law and love.

Another objection arising from this misconception is that God's revelation ceased with the death of the last of Christ's apostles. The revelation was then complete and recorded in a book; and God leaves that book among men as his finished revelation by which the world is to be converted. Then either God does not continue to illuminate human minds and to touch human hearts by his Spirit, or, if he does so, the influences of the Spirit do not constitute a revelation of God to the person thus influenced.

A further objection founded on this misconception arises from its implying that every sentence in the Bible being dictated word for word by God is infallibly correct, and is of equal, absolute and perpetual divine authority and of spiritual significance worthy to be revealed by him. Silas Marner, reasoning from this misconception, believed that the decision by lot is an infallible expression of the just decision of God (Prov. xvi. 33). Therefore, when a decision by lot seemed to him unjust, he began to doubt the existence of a righteous God. So one's faith in God's revelation might be shaken through his inability to find any spiritual significance as a verbal revelation from God in the minutely exact account of the length and breadth of king Og's iron bedstead (Deut. iii. 11). Similar difficulties inevitably arise when one accepts the theory that God's revelation is only in a book, every syllable of which was dictated directly by God. Then one's belief in the revelation recorded in the Bible, like a pyramid resting unstable on its apex, rests its whole weight unstable on every separate word. If a single sentence, phrase or word is found to involve the slightest error of any kind, or if it is not of universal applicability and spiritual significance through all ages, then the person's belief all topples over, the whole Bible must be rejected as not the revelation of God, and all belief in Christ and Christianity must be abandoned. Thus, for example, Mr. Garrison and many abolitionists of his type denied the divine authority of the Bible as a revelation of God, because slavery was recognized in the Mosaic legislation and Christ and his apostles did not at once initiate a crusade against

slavery as it then existed in the Roman empire.[1] This objection is seen to be futile when we understand aright the nature and extent of God's revelation of himself by his historical action among men. It would be equally pertinent to object to the reality of Christ's revelation of God because he did not incite a revolt against the despotism of the Roman emperor and attempt at once to establish republican government by the people; or, that he did not make known all the discoveries of modern science and the inventions of modern art. Accordingly we find that this misconception of the nature of revelation is rejected by Christ, who explicitly teaches that the Mosaic legislation failed to enjoin some applications of the moral law and some developments of the religious life, because the people were not developed sufficiently to receive them (Matth. xix. 3-9). Thus he recognized the principle that God's revelation of himself must be commensurate with the development of the people who receive it, and therefore must be progressive in his historical action in the redemption, education and development of man and the advancement of his kingdom and of the reign of universal righteousness and good-will.

This misconception of revelation has a tendency to fix attention on truths and laws rather than on the living God and his loving work among and upon men redeeming them from sin and developing his kingdom. Extremes meet. The conception of revelation as a revelation of truth rather than of the living, loving, and energizing God, as a book-revelation completed and recorded in the Bible with verbal and literal exactness, has been regarded as the highest orthodoxy. This generates evil tendencies. One is a tendency to rationalism. It accustoms the mind to dwell on abstract truths rather than on concrete realities. Truth stated in propositions may stand between the mind and the living God. It may hang as a veil before the Holy of Holies, hiding God and his mercy-seat. Truth is properly transparent. It is the medium through which we see reality. But if the eye of the mind rests

[1] Rev. Mr. Spurgeon said of the Bible: "I do not believe that from one cover to the other there is any mistake in it of any sort whatever, either upon natural or physical science, or upon history or anything whatever. I am prepared to believe whatever it says, and to take it believing it to be the Word of God; for if it is not all true it is not worth one solitary penny to me."

on the medium, on the subjective truth stated in a proposition, instead of looking through it to the concrete reality of which the subjective apprehension of the truth is the intellectual equivalent, the reality is hidden from the view. This is analogous to sight. The medium through which light comes to the eye may obstruct the light and hinder the vision.

> As one who looks on glass
> On it may rest his eye;
> Or let his vision through it pass
> And then the heavens espy. — GEORGE HERBERT.

Thus the habit of thinking of God's revelation as merely the revelation of truths, doctrines, precepts, recorded in a book, tends to arrest the thought, so that it stops and rests on the book with its propositions and doctrines instead of passing through these to the living God; and so it gradually fades from view that the Bible is the record of God's gracious action among men continued in the course of history through the ages till it culminates in the great revelation of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and perpetuated through all subsequent ages through the Holy Spirit in whom God comes to every reader of the Bible in the exercise of the same redeeming grace, seeking with heavenly influences to induce him to turn from selfishness and sin and accept the same free grace offered in the gospel without money and without price. Hence a tendency of the thought to rest on abstractions instead of on the living God; to think of truth, doctrine, precept, rather than of God. And this is a tendency toward rationalism. Then those who yield to this tendency draw the inference that the revelation made by Christ is limited to his recorded teachings, "the words of the master." Then the whole historical action of God in the redemption of men from sin through Christ gradually sinks out of view. Christ is regarded as one of many eminent teachers, perhaps recognized as the greatest, but still one of them. Some go even so far as to say that, since now we have the truth which Christ is said to have taught, it is entirely immaterial whether he ever existed or not. Thus the revelation of God by his action in the universe and in human history is lost from sight. Then the thought is that God is known not by any action of his own revealing himself in the consciousness of the individual and in the history of man, but solely by the action of man's intellect developing the idea of God. Then

God sinks into an abstract, impersonal, subjective idea and the universe is conceived as grounded ultimately in the unconscious and impersonal. [1]

Thus there is danger in this direction of the complete abandonment, not only of Christian belief, but also of theism itself. The belief in God being thus the product solely of the person's own thinking, the necessary inference is that God is only an idea created by the person's own mind and without objective reality. Thence the mind easily drops into agnosticism or ideal pantheism.

Under the influence of this misconception of the revelation of God in the Bible the thought does not always stop even in the abstract doctrine, truth, or precept. There is also the tendency, already alluded to, to stop in the words. The Bible is regarded as a book of sentences, a repository of doctrines, an arsenal of proof-texts, a collection of precepts and rules. Then because in the Old Testament a ceremonial of worship was prescribed adapted to the needs and development of the people at the time, the tendency was to substitute the outward ritual for the inward life which the ritual was designed to foster and develop, and to regard it as obligatory everywhere and always, a tendency which the prophets continually rebuke. The same tendency led to the rabbinical and pharisaical literalism in interpreting the Scriptures. This Christ rebuked, and of it Paul said, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). It was an attempt to apply the outward letter of the Scriptures to every conceivable condition and circumstance and to the most minute actions. Such were the minutely ramified rabbinical rules for observing the Sabbath, rules full of trivialities and quibbles. They forbade the curdling of milk on the Sabbath because it would be a kind of building; walking through fields of ripening grain, because it would be a kind of threshing; wearing any ornament temporarily attached to the dress but not a permanent part of it, because it would be bearing a burden. With a similar and even more ludicrous literalism, when the citizens of Florence were eagerly

[1] "If religion were a pure product of human reason, philosophy would be the only competent organ of its discovery and interpretation." — Lotze, "Microcosmus," B. ix. chap. iv. 1. A recent writer says: "Religion I saw was an expansive force which would shatter any man-made system of philosophy, unless that system were a true image of the universe."

looking at the starry heavens through Galileo's telescope, the priests rebuked them from the Bible in the words of the Vulgate, then the recognized translation: "*Viri Galilaei, quid statis spectantes in coelum?*" (Acts i. 11.)

From this literalism a seemingly opposite tendency has been originated. Because every sentence of the Bible is supposed to have been dictated directly by God, it must be supposed to be fraught with important spiritual significance. Then if such meaning is not apparent in the words it must be thrust into them. Hence arises a sort of maxim in interpretation, that a text of Scripture means whatever of spiritual truth a lively imagination can connect with the words. Hence arise allegorizing and extravagant typifying. Popular lectures have recently been given in many places on the spiritual signficance of the raiment of the Jewish High Priest. It was assumed by the lecturer to be legitimate to ascribe to every item of the high priest's official dress any spiritual meaning which the fancy could suggest; as Whittington interpreted what the Bow bells said to him. Bunyan, developing the spiritual significance of the architecture of the temple, discourses at length on the spiritual significance of the position of the brazen oxen which supported the laver, "all their hinder parts were inward." (1 K. vii. 25). As a result of this tendency the later Rabbinism, it has been said, "found mountains of meaning in a single word" and thrust a meaning even into the tittle of an Aleph.

2. These difficulties are removed and the force of these objections is annulled when we return to the fundamental position that God reveals himself primarily by what he does in the constitution and evolution of the physical universe, in the constitution of man and in his progressive education and development. The Bible is then seen to be the record of the special line of God's action redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom, which was intended to issue, and in the fulness of time did issue, in the coming of Christ and has been perpetuated through all subsequent ages in the Holy Spirit. What God reveals is primarily himself, the living and loving God acting in the universe and among and upon men. He reveals truth only in a secondary sense; for the truth revealed is simply man's intellectual apprehension of what God really is and does as he has revealed and is revealing himself in his action, and pre-eminently in his action

redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will as recorded in the Bible.

All knowledge of God presupposes his revelation of himself by acting on us or under our observation. By the intuition of reason we know universal principles regulative of all thinking and acting. But by these subjective principles alone we cannot know what beings actually exist and what are their characters and lines of action. These can be known only as they reveal themselves, their constitutional powers, and their characteristics, by acting directly on us or under our observation, or by the observed effects of their action. From the intuition of reason we know that the absolute Being exists and is the absolute Reason or Spirit. But what will be the lines of his action and the effects of the same, we can know only as he reveals himself in action. As Lotze says, God's revelation is either contained in some divine historic action in the past, or is repeated and renewed by his continued action in the hearts and lives of men.[1] Even our knowledge of the existence of the absolute Spirit arises only on occasion in experience of our knowledge of ourselves actually existing as rational beings, and of the physical or natural world which environs us, which we find by observation to be constituted in conformity with the necessary and universal principles of reason known intuitively in our own consciousness. The same principle is true of our knowledge of the physical world; we can have no knowledge of it except as it first reveals itself by acting on us. The same principle applies to the Bible. In it we have the record of a special line of God's historical action from the earliest time, culminating in Christ and perpetuated in the Holy Spirit. Therein God reveals to us, not only his existence, but what he is as the God of love and what is the archetypal ideal which he is progressively realizing in the evolution of the universe. That ideal is called in the Bible the Kingdom of God.

From this point of view it is evident that the common distinction between revealed religion and natural, so sharply defined that each excludes the other, is misleading. Every religion so far as it rests on truth, is both revealed and natural. Every religion may be called revealed because the knowledge of God implied in it presupposes God's action revealing himself. Hence man in his normal development finds himself in the presence of God, his

[1] Microcosmus, Book ix. chap. iv., Transl. vol. ii. p. 660.

spiritual environment, as really as in the presence of the outward world, his physical environment. His intellectual apprehension and definition of the former, but not more than of the latter, may be fanciful and erroneous. But he knows the existence of each, because he finds himself in the presence of each environing him, acting on him and so revealing itself to him. It is equally true that religion is natural to man. It is natural in the sense that the belief in God is accordant with the constitution and evolution of the physical or natural universe as the basis essential to any rational and scientific knowledge of it. It is natural also in the sense that belief in a God and religious service rendered to him are accordant with the constitution of man and essential to his normal development. Accordingly, belief in a divinity and religious worship of some sort are found in all stages of man's development, even in the lowest savage,

> "whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind."

And religion is essential to the highest perfection and well-being of the individual and of society. It is an essential factor in the normal education and development both of the individual and of the race. Any education of children, which ignores God and all religious belief and excludes all religious instruction, must fail to insure the highest and normal development, and must issue in the deterioration of the people. Our own is the only nation, Christian or non-Christian, which, at least theoretically, forbids all recognition of God and religion in the schools. And this prohibition is entirely inconsistent with the fact that both the States and the national government from the beginning, in the administration of the government, have in various ways officially recognized man's dependence on God, and the reality and necessity of religion.

3. This conception of God's revelation of himself by historical action does not exclude prophecy, the revelation of himself in the personal experience of individuals, putting them in possession of divine truth which they, as witnesses for God, are to communicate to others. On the contrary, revelation as thus conceived includes prophecy as part of God's historical action revealing himself therein to men, and incidental to the development of his kingdom, in which he is progressively realizing his archetypal ideal of

all perfection and well-being possible to be realized in a finite universe in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason by action in universal good-will regulated in its exercise by perfect wisdom and righteousness.

The possibility of God's revelation of himself in prophecy rests on the fact that God has made men in his own likeness, and so is capable of coming into immediate communion with them, and thus of revealing himself to them. Man, being in the likeness of God as rational spirit, is capable of receiving God's revelation of himself. All religions presuppose in the act of worship the possibility of immediate communion of man with God. It is set forth pre-eminently in Christianity. God in Christ has come into humanity revealing at once his own righteousness and grace in seeking men to redeem them from sin, and the ideal perfection of man attainable through trusting God's grace thus revealed. This redemptive action of God in Christ is perpetuated in the Holy Spirit in whom God in his righteousness and grace is ever seeking men to redeem them from sin and reconcile them to himself in the life of love. The Spirit is represented as standing at the door of every heart and knocking. When any one willingly opens the door and receives the divine grace, the Spirit is said to enter in and to abide in him, enlightening and quickening him in the spiritual life of love. This immediate communication by God of light and quickening to a person is of the essential nature of all prophetic revelation of himself. The man who receives it becomes a witness for God, and can say, "Come and hear, all ye who fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxvi. 16). Prediction of future events is not essential in prophecy. But prophets have often been so enlightened by God as to foretell the future. Prophecy in this aspect also has a basis for its possibility and probability in the character of the true religion as the religion of promise. The biblical representation is that, from the primeval promise in Eden to the promise to Abraham, and from the promise to Abraham to the coming of Christ, the true religion was always the religion of promise, looking forward to larger development and a future better than the past. After the institution of the political and religious economy of Israel at Sinai this promise was sealed in the memorial name Jehovah, the God in covenant with his people. The same continues to be the character of the religion after Christ. Paul says,

"We, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise" (Gal. iv. 28). The Christian, then, in every generation can foretell the future. He knows that all things work together for good to him who loves God; that God's kingdom can never be shaken; that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; that it will grow like the corn, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Through intimacy with God and seeing things with spiritual discernment in the divine light, he sees in any emergency what lines of private or public action are in the exercise of love and in harmony with God, and will secure well-being, and what are contrary to righteousness and good-will and displeasing to God, and will insure calamity and ruin. Thus he has clearer discernment, and sees farther into the future than selfish partisans who in shrewdness and cunning look only to the expedient. He is the poor wise man who by his wisdom delivers the city, although no man remembers that same poor wise man (Eccles. ix. 15). Here we see that prophecy, in its essential characteristics, is perpetuated through all generations in the kingdom of Christ. In this sense is fulfilled the prophecy of Joel — declared by Peter on the day of Pentecost to be fulfilled in the descent of the Spirit and his continued presence and action — that in the Messianic days the gift of prophecy shall be possessed by all true disciples of Christ, and perpetuated through all generations in the kingdom of Christ (Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17, 18). Therefore the prophecies recorded in the Bible do not differ from the continued illumination by the indwelling Spirit in the essential characteristics of prophecy so much as in degree and fulness, especially in the larger and more specific knowledge of future conditions and events in the progress of God's kingdom.

We have already seen that man, in the exercise of rational free will, is supernatural and acts on nature from above it, producing effects which nature left to itself would never have produced; and that this is the essential characteristic of miraculous action. Now we see that man, quickened by the Spirit of God dwelling in him, has the gift of prophecy in its essential characteristics. Thus all *a priori* objections to both miracles and prophecy as abnormal and impossible are seen to be without foundation and futile.

The biblical prophecies, being incidental to the historical development of God's kingdom, are occasioned by special emergencies in the history of God's kingdom in Israel, and refer primarily to

the condition of the kingdom at the time. Paul was an inspired prophet. Yet all his letters refer to particular exigencies and conditions of the churches and the individuals to whom he was writing, and to his own personal condition, needs, and plans at the time. That a similar reference to existing conditions characterizes the written prophecies of the Old Testament is obvious to every intelligent reader. The biblical prophecies present what God has revealed to the prophet in relation to his people and kingdom under existing conditions. They declare what course of action God would have them pursue under the circumstances; they warn the people of the disasters they will bring on themselves if they do not trust God and obey his directions as made known to them through the prophet, and announce the blessings insured to them if they trust and obey him. In connection with this there is usually an outlook to the progress of the kingdom in the future and the greater revelation of God's grace and of his intimacy with man, and foretelling with ever-increasing clearness the Messianic days.

God is represented as revealing himself to his prophets in various forms or theophanies. When his message is communicated by a messenger or angel in human form, the angel or messenger of the covenant, or the angel or messenger of Jehovah, the communication is represented as made in words. Even in the manifestation of God which the Jews called the Shechinah, clothing himself with light as with a garment, he is sometimes represented as uttering his will in words, as he spoke to Paul from a brightness above the noon-day sun, and to Moses from the Burning Bush. Nor can we feel that there is any force in objections to such manifestations of God, if we really believe in the supernatural as the fundamental reality, in the immanence of God in the universe, and in the possibility and even the probability of miracles in the greater emergencies which constitute epochs in the development of God's kingdom. But ordinarily, as we may reasonably suppose, the inspiration of the prophet does not imply dictating the divine message to him in words. Rather we may suppose that God's Spirit brings divine influences on the person through his rational, moral, and spiritual powers, capacities, and susceptibilities, quickening his spiritual life and insight, bringing him into unison with God, so that he sees the condition of the people as God sees it, and thinks God's thoughts after him, in

the spiritual and moral sphere, as scientists do in ascertaining the constitution, order, and laws of the physical system, and so are able to foretell events in the physical system. Then he utters the divine teaching in his own words, and in the use of his own reason and intelligence declares, explains, and illustrates it. Accordingly Paul declares, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor. xiv. 32). The biblical prophecy is rational and intelligent, as distinguished from the mantic fury of the ancient non-Christian soothsayers. So on Mount Carmel Elijah was self-collected and calm, while the prophets of Baal, in a delirium of excitement, leaped on the altar and cut themselves with knives (1 Kings, xviii. 26).

Because prophecy is incidental to God's historical action in the development of his kingdom, the prophet will proclaim it from the point of view of his own time, and from within the bounds of his own development and that of his age and country. He is like one within a house to whom a window is opened. He can see through it to the horizon; but what he sees is limited by the frame of the window through which he looks, and the indistinctness of distant objects which he, being shut up within the walls of the house, cannot approach and examine closely. The prophet may announce great and far-reaching revelations of God, but his appreciation and application of them will be limited within the frame of his development and that of his age. Hence his apprehension and application of them may be all that is possible in his time, and best suited to it; but it may be superseded in its details by larger revelations of God and the progressive development of the kingdom of God in later ages.

4. This conception of God's revelation of himself by his historical action discloses the unity and continuity of his revelation in the redemption of men from sin and the development of his kingdom on earth through all the ages. This gives irresistible evidence that the Bible is the record of God's revelation of himself in this historical action. Here we see the religion recognizing the one God, the eternal Spirit, amid surrounding nature-worship and idolatry, and the kingdom of God, founded on his communion and gracious covenant with his people, existing from the earliest times, and perpetuated and developed in the history of Israel until Christ came. At his coming, this ancient monotheistic religion is developed into Christianity and perpetuated

through all the ages by the presence of the Holy Spirit poured out on all mankind. Ever since Christ rose from the dead, this religion, as developed by him, has been the most powerful and benignant agency in the progress of man. In the early ages it was germinal and imperfectly developed. But from the beginning it has been the same religion and the same kingdom of God in the process of development.

The philosophy of history recognizes some particular line in which each nation has contributed to the increase of knowledge and the advancement of civilization. It is evident that the mission of Israel was to preserve and develop the knowledge of the one true God, the eternal Spirit, and the religious worship and service of him. The continued discovery of Babylonish, Assyrian, and Egyptian inscriptions is enlarging our knowledge of the history of these great kingdoms, and thus not only confirming the truth of Old Testament history, but also incidentally enlarging our knowledge of the history of Israel beyond what is recorded in the Old Testament, and explaining the relations, occasions, and issues of what is recorded. From these inscriptions it is made increasingly evident that the writers of the Old Testament wrote with predominant interest in the knowledge of Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, and in the religious worship and service due to him. They omit details, and sometimes pass over lightly or omit altogether events recorded in the inscriptions, which did not bear directly on this prime interest of the Jewish theocracy. This predominance of the idea of God's kingdom in Israel is still more evident in the Psalms and the Prophets, so far as they allude to historical events. The external history is but the setting of the jewel, "holding forth the Word of Life." There were also from time to time peculiar conditions in the history of Israel which seem to put the nation to disadvantage as compared with the greater and mightier nations around it; but which are seen to have been positively advantageous in preserving and developing the knowledge and religion of the one God, the eternal Spirit. The Hebraic monarchy never equalled Babylon, Assyria, or Egypt. Of this, Professor McCurdy says: "This disadvantage was a decided advantage for the fulfilment of their providential mission; since through no other channel than a self-contained, politically unambitious, locally restricted community, could, in the old Semitic times, the simple and pure religion of

Israel have been conserved and conveyed to later generations of men without destructive contamination from the worldly forces that made for unrighteousness." [1]

Therefore the Old Testament is not chiefly concerned with the political history of Israel. It is primarily the record of that line of God's action in the redemption of men from sin and the establishment of his kingdom which was to culminate in the coming of Christ. The spiritual kingdom was hidden within the shell of the political organization of Israel, to protect it in its germinal development. So a chestnut is hidden in its shell and its rough bur to protect it in its germinal development until it is ready to burst its envelope, fall into the ground, and grow into a great tree. Accordingly the Bible is a collection of books written by many different authors at different times in the lapse of many centuries. Each author writes from the point of view of his own age, but presents to us one and the same God in his covenant relations with his people, one and the same kingdom of God at different stages of its development, one and the same outlook, more or less distinct, to blessing to come on all the nations through the seed of Abraham in the Messianic days. It matters not if some of the books as they finally appeared in the Jewish Scriptures show the results of the examination and comparison of previously written documents. This simply shows the pains taken to attain from all sources the true history of the kingdom of God in Israel. Whenever they were written, they were all written amid surrounding polytheism and the worship of nature-gods, and all concur in maintaining the knowledge of one true God, the eternal Spirit, of his covenant relations with all who trust and serve him, and of his spiritual kingdom living and germinating within the political and ecclesiastical organization, and destined to a greater development in the future.

We have already seen that God's revelation of himself to any prophet or inspired writer must have been received by him from within the limitations of his own personal development and of the development of his age. But these are temporary conditions. All in the prophets' communications peculiar to these conditions, having fulfilled their purpose, drop off with advancing growth. So the calyx and flower drop off when the seed appears, and the

[1] "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," by J. F. McCurdy, LL.D., Professor of Oriental Languages in University College, Toronto; p. 58, § 53.

bur or shell, or whatever is the coating of the seed, falls off when the seed is ripened and ready to fall into the ground and grow into a new plant. The narrative of the Lewis and Clarke expedition to the head-waters of the Missouri and thence across the mountains to the Pacific, at the beginning of this century, gives a true description of the country as it then was. It is still a true account of the course of the rivers, the mountains, the great physical features of the country. But its account of it as an uncultivated wilderness inhabited only by Indians and wild beasts, though correct at the time, is true no longer. Yet there is no contradiction between it and the true description of the country now. So the representation in the Old Testament of the kingdom of God incompletely developed in Israel is true and is not contradictory to the representation of the same kingdom in the great epoch of its development at the coming of the Christ. It is the revelation of the same God, the eternal Spirit, of God in the same work of redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom. But whatever was merely incidental and peculiar to the earlier stages of the development of the kingdom recorded in the Old Testament has passed away. With reference to this unity and continuity of the kingdom of God and of God's revelation of himself in its progressive development our Saviour says, "Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" (Matth. v. 17, 18). And this he says in that very sermon on the mount in which he sets himself above Moses and the prophets and unfolds a spiritual significance and application of the law transcending all previous interpretations of it, and even forbids a usage which he elsewhere says Moses had tolerated on account of the hardness of the people's hearts (Matth. v. 31, 32; xix. 3–9). The living but germinal kingdom had now burst its shell and was unfolding in a higher and spiritual glory and power.

The fact that the Bible has been thus composed, and is the product of the development of the monotheistic belief, the true religion, and the kingdom of God through the ages until Christ and the introduction of the Christian religion, is not an objection to it, but a powerful confirmation of its divine origin and authority as the record of God's revelation of himself to men.

5. This is confirmed by its continued spiritual and beneficent influence through all the ages of the Christian era. Here is this one religion in the process of development in continuity and unity through thirty centuries, which at the coming of Christ, by sheer moral and spiritual influence appealing to reason and conscience and all that is highest and best in man, in spite of the opposition of both Jew and Gentiles and of the power of the Roman emperor, became the religion of the whole Roman empire, through all the Christian centuries has been the most effective influence in the advancement of true culture, respect for the rights of man, humaneness and the highest civilization, and to-day is the religion of the most enlightened, highly civilized, and progressive nations. Thus the Bible was itself the outgrowth of the development of the true religion and of the kingdom of God through many centuries to the great central historical fact of the coming of Christ. It struck its roots into human history through ages before Christ came, and has shot forth its branches blooming and bearing fruit through all the ages since. Contrast this with the alleged revelation of God in the Koran. The latter has no historical roots. It claims to be only a verbal revelation, a book-revelation made by immediate divine communications to one man in a short portion of his one life and written down by him or at his dictation. Something was borrowed from the Bible. But that which was borrowed was detached from its historical and vital connection, like twigs cut from a living bush and set in a child's garden, where they had no roots and could not grow. Therefore, as Kuenen says, "Islam was destined to stereotype itself once for all and assume its unalterable shape. . . . True universality is to Islam, in virtue of its very origin, unattainable." [1]

Mohammed's truth lay in a holy Book,
Christ's in a holy life.
So while the world rolls on from change to change,
And realms of thought expand,
The letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man's hand;
While, as the life-blood fills the growing form,
The Spirit Christ has shed
Flows through the ripening ages fresh and warm,
More felt than heard or read.

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES (*Lord Houghton*).

[1] National Religions and Universal Religions, pp. 57, 58.

In the centuries since Christ, the principal instrumentality used by the Spirit of God in quickening men to the new life of love and bringing them into harmony and union with God has been the special revelation of God in his action before Christ redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom, in the coming of Christ, in his person and work and the descent of the Holy Spirit constituting the central epoch in God's work of redemption and the development of his kingdom, and in all the inspired teaching of the prophets and apostles and the oral teaching of Christ. All this is recorded in the Bible, and it is in this record that the knowledge of God as thus revealed has been perpetuated through the ages. But here that which is of most importance is not that the mere knowledge of God's self-revelation in past ages is perpetuated, but that in accordance with the revelation in Christ the Spirit of God himself has continued present and active among and upon men, redeeming them from sin and developing his kingdom in continuance and further development of that redemptive action in which he has revealed himself as recorded in the Bible.

If we accept the old conception of revelation as being the Bible itself as a book of sentences declaring certain truths, certain rules of action, certain affirmations of God's righteousness and grace, then God's revelation of himself was completed and finished when the canon of Scripture was completed. This issues in the practical impression, if not the explicit belief, that God had made and finished a book and put it into the world to convert the world, while Christ with his redeeming love had withdrawn from the earth and the earthly life of man. Thus the Bible itself becomes a dead wall of separation between God and man, which shuts us out from all contact with God continuing to reveal himself among men and to them. Many centuries ago, beyond that dead wall, God was revealing himself among and to men. But he reveals himself no more. On the contrary, according to the true conception of God's revelation of himself by his action on and among men redeeming them from sin and developing his kingdom, God is still revealing himself to men in the Holy Spirit. This is explicitly declared by Christ in his assurance that he would send the Spirit from the Father. Christ also says explicitly, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John xvi. 7). We have traced God's revelation in different

grades: in the constitution and evolution of the physical universe, in the constitution and history of man, in the special line of revelation culminating in Christ, in whom God presents himself to men as it were in miniature, acting among them under human limitations and conditions, thus giving at once the highest form of revelation of what God is as Spirit, and of what man is in his ideal perfection in the likeness of God. No revelation higher and more complete than this in kind is conceivable. But this of itself, if left as a mere isolated historical event nineteen centuries ago, would not be adequate to the complete applicability and greatest effectiveness of the revelation in God's redemption of men from sin and development of his kingdom. If Christ had remained on earth in the body, he would have been limited to one place. If he travelled, people would not know where to find him. If he abode in one place, as the Jews of that day expected that the Messiah would reign in Jerusalem, people must come from the ends of the earth to see him, and then would be unable to come at him for the crowd. To the immense majority an interview with him, if attained at all, would be the rare event of a lifetime. He could no longer say, "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It was necessary, therefore, that this redeeming love and energy of God, revealed so clearly in Christ, be delocalized and made universal. This is effected in the outpouring of God's Spirit, seeking all men through all generations to draw them to God, to enlighten, quicken, and sanctify them. This precludes forever the idea that we are living in an inferior dispensation, shut out from spiritual contact with God in his continued redemptive action developing his kingdom, and the continued revelation of God involved therein. On the contrary, we are living on the highest plane which God's self-revelation has yet attained, under the same revelation as of old, continued and progressively amplified in adapting it to new times and conditions. Christians in every generation, trusting in God, may say, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). The revelation in Christ known to us historically is perpetually renewed to us, being illuminated by the Spirit of God shining in our hearts and quickening us to receive and apply it. "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 14).

The revelation recorded in the Bible, therefore, is no longer a dead wall separating us from God and shutting out all present revelation of him. It is rather the progressive opening of the heavens pouring the light and glory of God and his love upon all nations, and more and more in successive revelations. Thus the action of God redeeming men from sin and developing his kingdom is continued through all generations, and is available for all men who seek his grace. Instead of being shut out from the revelation of God closed centuries ago, we find ourselves living under the same divine and heavenly influences in which God revealed himself of old, and admitted to personal communion, fellowship, and union with God. As in the Old Testament we are not merely reading truths and laws communicated by prophets, but the revelation of the living God, as in the New Testament we are not merely reading the oral teachings of Christ and the written teaching of the apostles, but are acquainting ourselves with the historical Christ, and the living God in Christ, redeeming men from sin and opening the way for sinners to return to him, — so in the ages since Christ Christians have not been left merely to a book telling of a revelation in ages past, but from which as finished and closed all subsequent generations are shut out, but God is ever present in the Holy Spirit, continuing in its higher stage the same work of redemption, and bringing all the rich influences of the knowledge of his revelation in the past to bear on our souls with personal divine influences to draw us to himself in the life of love, and to hold us thus in unison and union with himself. In the whole revelation until this day men are not dealing with abstract truths or laws, but with the living personal God. Thus the Christian now is the heir of all the riches of divine revelation given in the past, with the continued presence and personal influence of the God in Christ reconciling the world to himself in the Spirit of Holiness. We live in the same conflict between love and selfishness, between the divine and the devilish, between the kingdom of God and the power of evil, in which Christ lived and suffered and died. And in it, it is the living God who is with us; as Christ himself said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" as Jehovah had said in the Old Testament, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Gen. xxviii. 15; Deut. xxxi. 6, 8; Josh. i. 5; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20). Athanasius says: "While we are illuminated by the Holy Spirit, it is Christ

who illuminates us; when we drink in the Spirit, it is Christ we drink in."[1] Phillips Brooks says: "One idea held by very earnest people, embodied in very faithful and devoted lives, is the strangeness of religion to the life of man, as if some morning something dropped out of the sky that had had no place on our earth before, as if there came the summons to man to be something entirely different from what the conditions of his nature prophesied and intended that he should be. The other idea is that religion comes by the revelation of God from the heavens, but comes up under the influence of God out of the human life of man; that man does not become something else than man when he becomes the servant of Jesus Christ, but then for the first time becomes man in his true development; that religion is not something fastened on the outside of life, but is the awakening of the truth inside of his life; that the kingdom of God is but the true fulfilment of human life and society."

> Is not God now in the world his power first made?
> Is not his love at issue still with sin,
> Closed with and cast and conquered, crucified
> Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?
>
> BROWNING. — *Death in the Desert.*

We see now that God's revelation of himself by his historical action gives a much fuller knowledge of him and rests on a much surer basis of credibility than could any revelation in words dictated to a prophet or written by "the finger of God." It might be thought that it would have been a clearer and more assured revelation of God if he had written on the sky in letters of stars, GOD IS A SPIRIT. But the inscription would be unintelligible unless God had previously revealed himself so that man had already attained the idea of God and spirit; it would be invisible to the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere; it must be written in some language not in existence when the stars came into being; it would be seen only in the night, so the sun would outshine and hide the revelation of God; it would be easier for the skeptic to refer it to chance than to refer to chance the actual rational and scientific constitution and evolution of the universe accordant with rational and scientific law from the minutest atom to the largest star. Thus it would be a less assured and less

[1] Epistle to Serapius, i. 19.

significant revelation of God than that which we have in the constitution and order of the universe, in the constitution and history of man, and in the development of God's kingdom progressive through all the ages. The revelation of God in these ways, and pre-eminently in that line of historical revelation of which the Bible is the inspired record, is, therefore, better verified and more intertwined, identified, and accordant with the normal constitution and development of the physical universe, and of man and the moral and spiritual system, than any other of which the human mind can conceive. This historical revelation in Christ continued historically in the Holy Spirit meets the wants of humanity which have been felt in all ages and supplies the spiritual forces effective in rescuing men from sin, reconciling them to God and advancing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will. Browning in his "Cleon" expresses truly the want, felt among the non-Christian nations, of realizing union with God which God in Christ alone can satisfy. He makes Cleon say:

> "Long since I imaged, wrote the fiction out,
> That Zeus or other God descended here,
> And, once for all, showed simultaneously
> What, in its nature, never can be shown
> Piecemeal or in succession; — showed, I say,
> The worth both absolute and relative
> Of all his children from the birth of time,
> His instruments for all appointed work.
> I now go on to image, — might we hear
> The judgment which should give the due to each,
> Show where the labour lay and where the ease,
> And prove Zeus' self, the latent, everywhere!"

CHAPTER III

GOD THE ABSOLUTE BEING

We are now to ascertain what we can know of God as the Absolute Spirit, unconditioned and unlimited by any being, power or environment independent of himself. This topic is usually designated in theology, The Attributes of God. It is objected that the so-called attributes of God are merely subjective ideas of theologians and are not objectively real in God. But we have seen that man does not attain his idea of God through subjective speculation merely, but by God's revelation of himself in various lines; and his thinking of God carries with it knowledge of objective reality. It would be just as pertinent to object that the attributes of the sun as discovered and declared in science are merely subjective ideas in the mind of the scientist. It is also objected that in ascribing attributes to God we regard him as divided. This has force only against an erroneous conception of simplicity in God, which some theologians have included among his attributes. It would be just as pertinent to object that a man is regarded as divided when we ascribe to him intelligence, will, and other powers, or that an atom of oxygen or of iron is divided by attributing to it various properties and powers. Each of these two objections is frivolous, and, if valid, would imply that it is impossible for man to have any knowledge of God whatever. John Smith, one of the Platonic divines of the seventeenth century, says: "Though in our pursuit after knowledge we cast wisdom, power, eternity, goodness and the like into several formalities, . . . yet in our naked intuitions of them, we clearly discern that goodness and wisdom lodge together, justice and mercy kiss each other; and all these, and whatsoever pieces else the cracked glasses of our reasons may sometimes divide the divine and intelligible Being into, are fast knit together in the invincible bonds

of eternity."[1] The truth in this is that God reveals himself to us as the one absolute Reason or Spirit, but in many ways and in various aspects; and by studying these revelations we must apprehend, as well as we can with our finite minds, what God is as thus revealed in the various aspects and attributes of his being. So the sun has been revealing itself to men through the ages in various ways and various aspects, and they have been studying the revelation to ascertain and declare in science what the sun as thus revealed is. And as the powers and qualities which we find revealed in the sun are objectively real in it, so the attributes which we find revealed in God are objectively real in him. But they are powers and attributes of him in his indivisible oneness as the perfect Spirit. Thus we reject the agnostic and pantheistic speculation which recognizes no distinct powers and qualities in the absolute Being. On the other hand, we must equally reject the superficial conception of a real division or separation. In man we distinguish reason, will, feeling, and their manifestations. But the one undivided person is revealed in every act. So God's attributes are the varying but harmonious aspects of his indivisible personality in which they are all at one. And in his consummate revelation of himself in Christ this harmony of his unchanging righteousness and benevolence, this unity of all the attributes, are most conspicuously manifested.

In speaking habitually of the attributes as the object of investigation there may be danger that the thought will rest on the attribute as an abstract idea instead of passing through it to God. As Sir Isaac Newton says, "It is not eternity and infinitude, but the eternal and the infinite Being."[2] It is important, therefore, in all our study and phraseology to keep in mind that we are seeking to know the one only living God in all the aspects in which he has revealed himself.

Theologians have proposed various classifications of the attributes of God. They have been most commonly classified as Natural and Moral. It seems to me that the most obvious and reasonable classification of what we know of God must rest on the two aspects of his being as the absolute Spirit. By unfolding what God is as the absolute Being, so far as he has revealed

[1] Select Discourses, 2d ed., Cambridge, 1673, p. 94.

[2] Principia: Scholium Generale.

himself, we get one class of his attributes. By unfolding what he is as absolute Spirit, so far as he has revealed himself, we get another class of his attributes. These would comprehend all which we can know of what God is in himself.

In this chapter we are to ascertain what we can know of God as the absolute Being, unconditioned and unlimited by any power or environment independent of himself. God in this aspect of his being can be defined only by negation. Hence some theologians have designated this class of the attributes of God as Negative, and the attributes of God as Spirit, Positive. This is misleading; it gives occasion to specious pantheistic and agnostic objections and covers not a little false reasoning. The negation is only in the definition, and is the negation only of limits and conditionedness. It is, therefore, itself the affirmation of real power beyond all limits and conditions. All the attributes of God, whether as absolute Being or as Spirit, are real and positive. In fact the affirmation of finiteness, as denying the existence of power beyond a definite limit, is the real negation. It is also evident that the modes of God's existence and action as the absolute Being thus defined by negation of limits and conditions cannot be pictured in the human imagination. Man never passes beyond the limits of the finite and has no data for picturing the absolute.

We have already seen that, in our intellectual processes ascertaining the reasonable grounds of our spontaneous belief in a divinity and what we can know of him, we find at the outset that it is a universal principle of reason that some absolute Being must exist. Then we ascertain that the absolute Being reveals himself in various ways as the absolute Spirit. Now we see that, because the negations implied in defining God's absoluteness have no meaning except as denying conditions and limitations of positive powers, we carry with us into our thought of the absolute the positive attributes of God as Spirit. In this way the absoluteness of God, though defined negatively, has always a positive significance. We do not deny the essential powers of the personal Spirit by denying that they are limited and conditioned; on the contrary, we affirm that they are great beyond all limits. Thus we never lose our grasp of the known and essential attributes of God as Spirit in our thought of him as the absolute

Being. God is the absolute personal Spirit, unlimited and unconditioned by any power independent of himself.[1]

The fact that God is unconditioned involves the fact that he is all-conditioning. If he is unconditioned by the whole web of finite causes and effects, this implies that he is independent of them; therefore that the universe with its entire chain or web of finite causes and effects is dependent on and conditioned by him. He is the all-conditioning, the Creator. The universe, with all in it that is finite, must be created by God and dependent on him.

It must, therefore, be borne in mind that the attributes of God as absolute are not to be studied as abstractions. Illimitation apart from any being that is unlimited is a mere zero. Absoluteness has reality only as predicated of the living God, the absolute Spirit, unconditioned and unlimited by any power or condition independent of himself.[2]

It may be supposed, because the absolute is defined by negation of limitations and conditions, that the number of attributes of this class must be indefinitely large. It is easy to enumerate many such negations, as that God is independent, immutable, incorporeal, indivisible. On the contrary it will be found that all the supposed negations may be included under four heads. These we proceed to consider.

I. Self-Existence. — The self-existence of God, the absolute Spirit, denotes that for his being and the powers essential in his being he is not conditioned by dependence on any cause. He is not an effect, but is uncaused. The whole chain of finite causes and effects and all the causes in it have their origin in God the first cause and are dependent on him. God is not in that chain,

[1] Biedermann says: "If we start from the empirical idea of man, we get only the representation of a finite spirit enlarged to infinity. Therefore our thought will proceed more securely from the pure logico-metaphysical idea of the absoluteness of God's being. This leads us through itself to the other essential element, the pure spirit-being, finding that this and the absolute being are one. The absolute being is the element of formal determination, the Spirit-being is the element of the real determination of the idea of the absolute Spirit, which is in itself one." — Christliche Dogmatik, p. 621, § 699.

[2] For further investigation of philosophical theories, questions and objections as to the absolute, see "Philosophical Basis of Theism," chaps. vi. vii. xii.; "Self-Revelation of God," chaps. viii. ix. x.

except as from above it he acts in it sustaining and directing it. He is above it and independent of it. The name Self-Existence is positive in form; but the attribute can be defined only by the negation of all dependence. God is self-existing and self-determining. His being and his powers have never been derived from without himself.

Theologians have attempted to define this attribute positively, by saying that God is the cause of himself. Lactantius says: "God before all things was procreated from himself. God of his own power made himself. . . . He is of himself; therefore he is such as he willed himself to be, incapable of suffering, unchangeable, incorruptible, blessed and eternal."[1] Jerome says: "God is the origin of himself and the cause of his own substance."[2] This form of definition continues in use at the present time. Julius Müller says that if there is in God any determinate essence or constitution (*Wesen*) which he has not caused by his own conscious self-determination, he would not know in the light of his own self-consciousness the depths of his own being, any more than a man can penetrate by his own consciousness the darkness in which the beginning of his own being is enveloped. The definition, God is the cause of himself, must be understood as positive, not in a negative sense as interpreted by some of our older theologians. "Its true significance is this, that the essence (*Wesen*) of God is merely his own act. . . . How can a being (*Wesen*) be the cause of itself in any other way than as it brings itself forth by conscious self-determination?"[3] He assumes that it must be a limitation and imperfection of God and must subject him to an external necessity in all his acts, if he is the eternal Reason, the almighty and all-perfect Spirit, and yet did not make himself so by his own conscious and self-determining act.

This error springs primarily from assuming that the existence of God is an inference from the principle that every beginning or change must have a cause; hence it is necessary to find a cause for God. But for the very reason that this principle has to do only with the beginning and change, it has no applicability to God, who never began to be. The very idea that God brought

[1] Divine Institutes, Bk. i. chap. vii., Bk. ii. chap. ix.

[2] Commentary on Ephesians, chap. iii. 14, 15.

[3] Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde, 5th ed., vol. ii. pp. 171–175; Translation, third ed., vol. ii. bk. iii., Part I. chap. iv. p. 138.

himself forth by a conscious act of self-determination makes him an effect and implies that he had a beginning. When it is seen that the truth that the absolute Being exists is not an inference from the law that every beginning or change must have a cause, but is a primitive principle and constituent element of reason and a universal law of thought, the whole question about God's being the cause of himself disappears.

The error that God is the cause of himself is downright absurdity. If God is the cause of his own being as Spirit, we must suppose a cause without personal attributes or essential powers of any kind causing or creating God as the absolute Spirit. But a cause without essential attributes is the same as nothing. It is a zero indicating absurdity or at least the cessation of intelligent thought. It implies that, before God came into being, he created himself. The necessary issue is that the universe and God himself are ultimately grounded in inanity. It implies the truth of an old doctrine, that God is pure action (*actus purus*). But pure action without an agent is a nonentity. And on this philosophy of emptiness Müller is at last obliged to rest, a position totally incompatible with his theology as he actually has developed it. He says: "The original beginning of all being, before which nothing is presupposed, is freedom, action." And he quotes Schelling with approval: "In the ultimate and highest resort there is no other being than volition. Volition is original being." But this is using words without meaning. Volition and action with no being that acts is nothing at all. It is finding as the ultimate ground of the universe an "abyss" of nonentity into which from the days of the Gnostics till now many have fallen; and some Christian writers without being aware of it.

The true meaning which Müller, Dorner, Rothe, and others seem to be trying to express in saying that God is the cause of himself is indicated by Schelling. "The nature-philosophy of our day has first set up in science the distinction between being (*Wesen*) so far as it exists, and being (*Wesen*) so far as it is the ground of existence. . . . Since nothing is before or without God, so must he have the ground of his existence in himself. This all philosophers say; but they think of this ground as a mere idea without making it into anything real and actual. . . . God himself needs a ground whereby he can be; but this is not out of him, but in him." Rothe says, "The absolute Being has

determined himself into the absolute *Ich* or the absolute personality. The divine personality is first in the actual being of God. Through its breaking forth comes the movement in the absolute rest of the divine Being."[1] This seems to imply that God rested in unconsciousness until at a certain time he waked himself up to conscious personality. In plain English, all the true meaning in this is that qualities, powers, and action presuppose a being. We may distinguish the being from its existence (*ex-sisto*) in which it stands forth in action and reveals itself. The agent is the author of his own action and of the character formed and revealed therein. Using the word *existence* in this sense we may say that God is the cause or author of his own existence, — that is, of his own action and character. God is always self-determining and self-exerting or energizing. But we must equally distinguish a being from its powers and qualities, under the category of substance and quality. A being cannot create its own essential powers and qualities, but can only act through them. Therefore, even with this explanation, the proposition that God is the cause of himself sinks into hopeless absurdity. God is. His name is evermore, I AM. It certainly can be no limitation of God that he is absolutely unlimited and independent; that he is uncreated and eternal, endowed from all eternity with all possible perfection as the absolute Spirit, unconditioned and unlimited as to his being or existence or powers or the exercise of his powers by any power independent of himself, determined only as he determines himself to act in harmony with the principles, laws and ideals of his own eternal and absolute reason. It is no limitation of God that he is eternally the all-perfect Spirit. If, for example, we consider God's love, it is in him what in man we should call his character as distinct from his constitutional capacities and powers. God's love is the harmony of his will with his reason in his eternal free choice. It must therefore be conceived as eternal self-determining activity. But always the action of God presupposes his being.

II. Immensity. — The immensity or omnipresence of God denotes that he is not limited or conditioned in space. Space and time, in which the finite universe is conditioned, are themselves, with the finite universe which they necessarily condition, archetypal

[1] Rothe, "Theologische Ethik," vol. i. p. 85, note, § 23, and pp. 121, 122.

and eternal in the absolute and universal Reason, which is God. They are thus subjective in the mind of God. But when, by God's creative action, they with the universe which they condition are projected into outward and finite reality, they are, like the universe which they condition, objectively real to us.[1] Therefore God's transcendence of them is not incompatible with their objective reality, because they have reality as conditions of the finite. The fact that he sustains relations to them is no limitation of him, because they with the universe which they condition have the cause and reason of their existence in him and thus are dependent on him. So Schleiermacher says: God is "the absolutely spaceless causality conditioning, with all that is extended in space (*allem räumlichen*), space itself."[2] And the fact that God acts in space and time and thus is immanent in the universe and reveals himself in it, is no limitation of him. The contrary would be true. If God were excluded from space so that he could not cause any effects in it, his causal energy would be restricted and he himself would be limited and conditioned by space. Therefore, in affirming God's immensity, we do not deny the reality of space nor the fact that God is present and active in it; we deny only that God is limited or conditioned by it. Hence, we properly use the positive designation, omnipresence, denoting that God is everywhere in space; yet we must always fall back on the negative idea of immensity or immeasurableness, because while in space he transcends it; he is not extended in it, nor bounded by it, nor does he occupy it to the exclusion of finite bodies; and consequently he is without shape or form.

The omnipresence of God cannot be pictured in the imagination. We are not to conceive him as an invisible ether extended through all space. Then he would be extended, measurable, divisible; a part of him would be here and a part there; the parts could be measured, so many cubic feet in one room, so many in another room; and God in his wholeness and oneness would be nowhere. On the contrary, he is equally and integrally present in every place.[3] Nor may we attempt to picture him, as some have done, as present only energetically by his universal knowledge and all-pervading action, as a man is said to be

[1] See "Philosophical Basis of Theism," pp. 162–165.

[2] Christliche Glaube, vol. i. § 53, p. 273.

[3] "In seipso ubique totus." Augustine, Epist., 187:4:14.

present in a room. This would imply that in his substantial being he is limited to a place and bounded in a shape or form.

Attempts have been made to illustrate the integral presence of God in every place, by various analogies. The older theologians use the analogy of the human spirit, which is undivided and entire in the whole body and in every part of it. Socrates refers to the day, which is the same and undivided in every place. Sir Isaac Newton gives the analogy of an indivisible moment of time, the same throughout all space. So a universal truth is true of every individual thing and in every place through all space. These illustrate the possibility of realities transcending space and not conditioned by it. But the imagination of man cannot picture the omnipresence of God.

Practically there is no difficulty. We know that God is present in every place in the sense that everywhere he is accessible to his rational creatures. Wherever a man may be he may enter into his closet and shut the door. And the door which shuts out the world opens into the immediate presence of God, and the man, *solus cum solo*, may commune with him and receive the communications of his grace. And so it is sublimely set forth in the Bible: "Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thine hand upon me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me."[1]

III. Eternity. — The eternity of God means that he is not limited or conditioned in time.

It has been shown that time, like space, has objective reality as the necessary condition of the created universe, and that, as inseparable from the universe which it conditions, it, like the universe itself, has no existence independent of God. Schleiermacher says: "God is the absolutely timeless causality conditioning, together with all that is temporal, time itself."[2] It follows that God is not limited by the fact that he is related to and active in time and the created universe existing in it. If God were ex-

[1] Psalm cxxxix.

[2] Der Christliche Glaube, vol. i. § 52, p. 268.

cluded from time so that he could not cause any effects in it, his causal energy would be restricted and he himself would be limited and conditioned by time; as excluded from acting in space and time he would be limited as really as man is by being shut up in time and space and unable to transcend them. Therefore we properly make the positive affirmation that God is present in all time as really as in all space, and accessible to all his rational creatures who would seek him at every moment through all time as he is at every point of space. Yet we must always fall back on the negative aspect of this truth, that while God acts in time he is not shut up within its limits. And this again discloses the positive significance of the negative definition, that God is not limited within the bounds of time, because he transcends them.

We proceed to consider the limitations of time denied in defining the eternity of God.

The eternal Being exists without beginning or end. Existence limited in time must have a beginning and may have an end. A dependent being has no guarantee of itself that it will exist forever. Its existence may be terminated by the power on which it depends. These limitations are denied of God. In respect to these no difficulty is usually felt.

Another limitation of a being in time is that its existence is transitional through a succession of events. This commonly occasions more difficulty. The following statement, so far as it goes, seems to give a real meaning. God as the absolute Spirit exists independent of time. Time, with the universe conditioned by it, is dependent on him. Acting in time God remains through all its succession and changes immutable and the same. He is not in the chain of causes and effects. He does not exist in transition through successive forms of being. In his being and his essential attributes as personal Spirit, he is immutably the same, the eternal One from whom all succession of events issues and by comparison with whom as the unchanging standard succession is possible. He is the I AM. Even in our own being we find an analogy with this. Every personal being persists in identity, while the subject of successive acts and events. A man, in the likeness of God in his rational free personality, is also an I AM; he abides one and the same person, unchanging in his personality and its essential attributes, through all the transitions and changes of his life. Matter

is in constant action and flux. Yet even this gives us a faint analogy. We are obliged to think of ultimate atoms unchanged and unabraded by all the collision and grinding of this energetic action ever since the worlds were made. God is unchanged and eternal not only in his being and his essential attributes, but also in the fulness of his knowledge, without increase or diminution, and therefore without succession. But as God's exemption from limitation in time does not preclude his presence and acting in it, so it does not preclude his knowledge of the distinctions of time and of events as present, past, or future. The universe in its whole existence is archetypal in the reason of God; he sees in it the map or plan of all that is being progressively realized in time. But he sees the difference between a being existing in time and another seen only ideally as about to exist in a distant future or that has existed in the past and exists no longer. If he could not know this he would be limited in time. He would be not only unable to act in it, but even to see into it. But his Reason is an open eye, seeing all which is, has been, or will be, and seeing it in its relation to time as actually measured by events. Only with this qualification is it true,

> "To thee there 's nothing old appears,
> Great God, there 's nothing new."

God's purpose to realize this archetypal plan in the finite universe in the forms of space and time is an unchanging and eternal plan. Yet immanent and ever active in the universe, he is progressively realizing it by his action in time. And his love, which constitutes his character, is an eternal and unchanging love which he is continuously and progressively expressing in all his action of creation, preservation, providence, and redemption.

The result which we have reached is, not eternity as immeasurable time, but the eternal and immutable God existing in all time and progressively revealing himself in the universe as it exists in time. God is the I AM. The universe is that which becomes. God is eternal. The universe is the progressive and never-completed revelation of him in time and space.

The eternity of God is involved in his self-existence. He is uncaused. Therefore he must be without beginning. He transcends the whole chain of causes and effects. Therefore he can never cease to be. As Biedermann expresses it, "The eternity

and omnipresence of God are the pure spaceless and timeless self-existence of the Absolute Ground of the universe." [1]

God's immutability is involved in his eternity. God is immutable in his being, in his personal identity, in his essential powers and attributes, in the fulness of his knowledge, in his universal and archetypal plan, and in his character as love. But this immutability is not incompatible with his immanence in the universe, progressively realizing in it his archetypal thought and acting in and on the finite beings in it in accordance with their constitutions and characters. God blessed Adam before he sinned, and afterwards condemned him. Each act was the expression of the same character. The change was not in God but in Adam. When a man steps from the sunshine into the cellar he passes from light to darkness; but the change is not in the sun but in the man. So always, as the world changes, God's action on it changes to adapt itself to it; but it is the world which changes, not God.

It is impossible for a finite mind to picture God in the imagination. The second commandment forbids the attempt to make any image of God with the mind not less than with the hands.

We attempt to picture eternity in imagination by tracing the succession of events backwards and forwards without beginning or end. Imagination wearies in the attempt and stops at last in the negation with which it began, "without beginning or ending." But the attempt to grasp the idea of the eternal through the succession of events in time helps to fill out with reality our idea of God who is eternal. In the universe as it is evolved in time, God is revealing himself and the fulness of his power, wisdom, and love, without beginning or ending, never greater and never less, inexhaustible, eternal. This revelation of the eternal is forever progressive but never complete. It gives a significance to the words of Plato, that time is the moving image of eternity.[2]

[1] Dogmatik, p. 627, § 702.

[2] In conceiving of the creation Plato supposes first an invisible sphere of living intelligence, in which are all the truths and principles of perfect reason and knowledge. Within this sphere and concentric with it the Creator has placed the sphere of the visible and corporeal universe. Thus the intelligence of the invisible sphere is interfused through the concentric and visible one and revealed in it. The invisible sphere of living intelligence is the pattern of the visible universe. "And as the pattern was eternal, the father and creator sought to make the universe the same so far as might be. Now

An attempt has often been made to picture God's eternity as an eternal Now. This form of representation goes back to Augustine. It was common in the middle ages. The maxim of the schoolmen was: "In eternity is one only instant always present and persistent." Cowley versified it.[1] This is only an attempt to picture eternity in forms of time, and to describe it in words peculiar to succession in time: the eternal *now* doth *always last;* the one only *instant* always *persists.* It involves absurdity, the same as in saying that a point of space, while remaining a point, is extended through all space. It is only an attempt to hide ignorance in words which convey no meaning. We do not find an eternal Now, but an eternal God.

IV. Plenitude. — The plenitude of God denotes that he is not limited in quantity. His power, his knowledge, all his perfections are unlimited in quantity or degree. If it were worth while to distinguish the absolute from the infinite, this attribute, as denying limitation of quantity, would be the infinitude of God, and the three others would denote his absoluteness. But this distinction I think unnecessary; it is confusing rather than helpful. The plenitude or fulness of God are names positive in form, but the definition is negative.

V. The practical influence of our investigation of what we can know of God as the absolute Being is not to remove him from us

the nature of the intelligent being is eternal, and to bestow eternity on the created was wholly impossible. Therefore he resolved to make a moving image of eternity, and, in setting in order the heaven, he makes an eternal image, going in measured movement, of eternity resting in unity; and this is what we call time." (Timæus, 37.) Augustine says, "Tempora fabricantur et ordinantur æternitatem imitantia." (De Mus., vi. 29.)

[1] Above the subtle foldings of the sky;
Above the well-set orbs' soft harmony;
Above those petty lamps that gild the night;
There is a place o'erflown with hallowed light;
Where heaven, as if it left itself behind,
Is stretched out far, nor its own bounds can find.
. . . . . .
On no smooth sphere the restless seasons glide,
No circling motion doth the time divide;
Nothing is there to come and nothing past,
But an eternal Now doth always last.

Davideis, Bk. i. lines 347–352, 359–362.

in his immeasurable and inconceivable greatness; but rather to bring him near to us. It does not annul, but greatens and intensifies all those spiritual attributes of the divine Being, his wisdom, power, and love, which attract us to him as the object of our loving trust and service. We can define his absoluteness only by negation of all limitation, conditionality, and dependence; we cannot picture him in the boundlessness of his glory. But by that very greatness transcending all dependence and all measure of space, time, and degree, we see that he is ever near us, and that to every rational being in every world through all space and time he is equally and integrally present and accessible in all the grandeur of his being and the fulness of his perfections and glory. All the resources of his absolute Being are available for the help of every one who seeks him in loving trust. The biblical writers do not present his transcendent greatness as the absolute Being philosophically or metaphysically, but poetically, devotionally, and practically. "He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts, xvii. 27, 28). "One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all" (Eph. iv. 6). "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matth. xxviii. 20). "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matth. xviii. 20). "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication" (1 Kings, viii. 27). "Thus saith the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place; also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. lvii. 15).

CHAPTER IV

GOD IS A SPIRIT: — REASON

God is the one only absolute Spirit. We have considered what we can know of him in his absoluteness or unconditionedness. We proceed to ascertain what we can know of him in the other aspect of his being, as Spirit. Here the basis for classifying our knowledge of him must be the essential attributes of a spirit, Reason, Free Will, and Feeling responsive to his consciousness of his own perfections and his manifestation of them in action, and therefore to the evolution of the universe and to the character and action of finite rational beings in it. In all these aspects of his being and his revelation of them in action he is conscious of himself as one and the same absolute Spirit. In this chapter we are to consider God as Reason; God in the aspect of his being as intellect, as intelligent, and having knowledge. Here theological thought is usually restricted to God's omniscience, the universality of his knowledge. The real object of investigation is God himself as the absolute Reason. Therefore we must consider the fact that his knowledge is archetypal and perfect as well as universal, and his relation, as The Absolute Reason, to the constitution and evolution of the universe and to all human knowledge.

I. God's Knowledge is Archetypal. — God knows the universe in his own eternal ideal before it exists as a finite reality in time and space. His eternal thought is the archetype of the finite universe.

1. God's knowledge as archetypal is independent of any outward and independent environment. It does not necessarily presuppose any object revealing itself by acting on him. Man's knowledge is never self-originated, but first arises on occasion of

the action on him of some outward object in his physical or spiritual environment, which thus reveals itself to him. It is only after he is thus from without waked to the consciousness of the outward, and therein to self-consciousness, that he can make himself and his own mental states the object of his attention, and can complete the circuit of knowledge within himself. But God is not waked to conscious mental action by the action on him of any object from without. He needs to receive no revelation. We stand on this side of the created universe. We know it only after it exists and ascertain what it is only by observation and investigation of it and by inference from the results of the same. But God's knowledge is eternal. He knows the universe in its archetype in his own reason before it exists in time and space. And this is the meaning of Augustine: "We see the things which thou hast made because they exist; but as to thee, they exist because thou seest them." [1]

2. God's knowledge as archetypal is the consciousness within himself of all the universal principles, laws, and ideals of reason, which determine what it is possible and right for power to effect, what are the rational laws according to which the universe is constituted and the rational ends for which it exists, and which make it susceptible of being known in science. So the inventor of a machine must know the principles and laws of mechanics, and the ends to be accomplished by it, before he can form a plan of it in his own mind. This is the primary and deepest significance of the fact that God's knowledge is archetypal. When I designate God as Reason, I do not use the word to denote the mere power of reasoning, but to denote the Mind or Spirit in whom are eternal and immutable the universal principles, laws, and ideals of reason, which render reasoning possible and are regulative of all thought and energy. This conception of God's knowledge as archetypal is presented poetically in the personification of Wisdom as being with God in his creation and development of the world as counsellor and master-workman (Prov. viii. 22–31). So Isaiah, after describing the minute mathematical exactness with which God had created and arranged the heavens and the earth, the sea and the land, the mountains and even the small dust of the earth, asks, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom

[1] Confessions, Lib. xiii. xxxviii. 53.

took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (Isa. xl. 12–14).

3. God's knowledge, as archetypal, is the ideal or plan of the universe and of all things in it, as by his creative action they are to exist in actuality in accordance with these rational principles, laws, and ends. An architect who plans a cotton-mill or a cathedral must not only know the principles, laws, and ends, regulating the construction, but must plan it to the minutest specifications. Thus the machinist or the architect knows the machine or building archetypally before he knows it in actuality. Others stand on the hither side of the structure and know it by observation and investigation. He who planned it stands on the thither side and knows it in its archetype before it is built. So the universe with all in it is seen by God as an archetype in his own reason which by his creative act is to have actuality. This gives a true meaning to the words of Mr. Hazard: "The material creation is but the imagery of the mind of God made palpable to us." [1]

This conception of the universe as progressively realizing and expressing the archetype eternal in the mind of God has been set forth poetically by Edmund Spenser: —

> "What time the world's great Workmaster did cast
> To make all things such as we now behold,
> It seems that he before his eyes had placed
> A goodly pattern, to whose perfect mould
> He fashioned them as comely as he could,
> That now so fair and seemly they appear
> As nought may be amended anywhere.
>
> "That wondrous pattern, wheresoe'er it be,
> Whether in earth laid up in secret store,
> Or else in heaven that no man it may see
> With sinful eyes, for fear it to deflower,
> Is perfect beauty, which all men do adore;
> Whose face and feature doth so much excel
> All mortal sense, that none the same may tell." [2]

Boetius expresses a similar thought: —

> "Tu cuncta superno
> Ducis ab exemplo, pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse
> Mundum mente gerens, similique imagine formans,
> Perfectasque jubens perfectum absolvere partes." [3]

[1] Freedom of Mind in Willing, p. 44.

[2] A Hymn in Honor of Beauty, lines 29–42, Works, vol. v. p. 332.

[3] De Consolatione Philosophiae, Lib. iii. metrum ix.

Voigt says, "All created things are originally ideas in the divine Spirit, and ideas related to one another in the unity of a system or plan. By creation these ideas are realized in the forms of space and time, and are thus made finite and individual beings; but also through their reciprocal dependence in an order of nature, they are bound in unity in a universe." [1] Here is the truth in Hegel's conception that the ultimate reality of the universe is thought. His error is that it is unconscious, impersonal thought abstracted from being. It is a very different conception that the ultimate reality of the universe is the thought of God, the absolute Spirit, the absolute Reason. Thomas Aquinas taught that "The ideas or types of things are God's thoughts; created beings are their realization. Man can become acquainted with these created beings through the senses; and by the light of reason he can attain more and more significant knowledge of the ideas which they express, as the mirrored images of the thoughts of God." [2] In fact, this conception of God as the absolute Reason and the contrary conception of him as sovereign Will not subject to reason were under discussion in the middle ages throughout the scholastic period. The latter view reached its extreme development in the philosophy of Duns Scotus and Occam. They pushed the supremacy of God's sovereign will to the extent of declaring that God's moral law itself was but the enactment of God's arbitrary and sovereign will, and that if he had commanded just the contrary, all persons would have been under equal obligation to obey, and what had been wrong would be right and what had been right would be wrong. This is the logical issue of not teaching that the universal and necessary truths of reason, on which all science and philosophy and morals as well as all theology depend, are eternal and unchangeable in the absolute Reason of God. The conception of the naked sovereignty of arbitrary and resistless will has been a prolific source of pernicious theological errors which have continued even into the present century. The error can be corrected and its pernicious influence counteracted only by returning to the full recognition of God as the absolute Reason, in his free will eternally self-determining in the light of reason and acting always in strict accordance with its eternal principles and laws and for

[1] Fundamental Dogmatik, p. 304.

[2] Noiré, "Die Welt als Entwicklung des Geistes," pp. 388, 389.

the realization of its ideals of perfection and well-being. God always acts in conformity with law. But it is not law imposed on him from without, but eternal in himself as the absolute Reason. Even man is so far in the likeness of God that in his own reason and conscience he is a law unto himself. To this day current theological thought fails adequately to appreciate in its full significance the fundamental reality that God as a Spirit is the absolute Reason, in whom all the essential and universal principles, laws, and ideals of reason, which regulate human thinking, are eternal. The truth which God reveals is not truth because he reveals it; he reveals it because it is eternal truth. The law which God commands us to obey is not law because he commands it; he commands it because it is eternal law.

4. The divine Reason is not an empty capacity or power of knowing which fills itself by acquiring knowledge. It is the eternal fulness of knowledge. The following gives us in the concrete a slight intimation of this fulness: "At a scientific meeting in Baltimore, Professor Peirce demonstrated that it would take an able mathematician 200,000,000,000 years to make a preliminary examination of a series of plane curves which he had pointed out. These were curves of the simplest laws. Add the more complicated; take also those revealed by different methods of investigation; add those which are not confined to one plane; pass then to the laws of surfaces and solids; and it is evident that in geometry, the simplest of possible sciences, there is opportunity for endless occupation and delight to an intelligent spirit. The other departments of mathematics, arithmetic, and algebra, are equally boundless in resources. The physical sciences, the historical group, the domains of psychology and metaphysics, and our gropings after ontology and theology, remain yet to show us what infinite resources there are for intellectual occupation in the coming cycles of eternity. And all this truth, which to eternity by its discovery may be giving fresh pleasure to the expanding mind, has been from eternity known to God."[1] And the Christ said of himself: "I am the truth," and it is said of him: "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden."

[1] Rev. Thomas Hill, D. D., LL. D., "The Natural Sources of Theology," p. 58.

[2] John xiv. 6; Coloss. ii. 3.

5. God, in the fulness of his knowledge of the archetype and reality of the universe, is not passive but active. All knowledge is mental action. We are conscious of a strain on our minds when we try to attend to many things or to comprehend a complicated object. But this is the consciousness of perplexity and difficulty incident to our limitations and weakness. Greater minds, transcending our limits, also transcend our perplexities and difficulties. Newton saw at a glance geometrical conclusions which inferior minds reach only through a process of demonstration. In the "Mécanique Céleste" the often-repeated phrase, "It is easy to see," by which Laplace passed to a conclusion at a single step, needs to be expanded into a demonstration for the ordinary mathematician; and Laplace himself in correcting the proof-sheets was sometimes obliged to study an hour to recover the dropped links. Yet this rapid action of the great mind is not less but more energetic than that of the laborious plodder. And when our minds are most intensely acting in the concentration of our whole attention and interest on an object, we become absorbed in it, we forget ourselves and take no note of the lapse of time, and are unconscious of effort. Such facts may help us to some conception of the infinite intensity of God's mental action, as, in the infinite fulness of knowledge, he concentrates his attention and interest on the universe, of which a single spatial form could be traced out by the greatest human mind only in thousands of millions of years. It may also help us to some conception of his unconsciousness of effort and of successive steps in knowing in this intense activity.

II. God's Knowledge is Universal. — It is unlimited in space, time or quantity. He is omniscient.

The attributes of God as absolute are predicated of him as the personal Spirit. Self-existence cannot be predicated of knowledge directly; for knowledge presupposes a being who knows. God's knowledge is archetypal, as already shown; and this is the characteristic of his knowledge corresponding to his self-existence and implied in it. We now affirm that God's knowledge is universal. This is the characteristic of his knowledge corresponding to his immensity, eternity, and plenitude, and implied in them. While he knows all which is limited in space, time and quantity, his knowledge is not confined within these limits but

transcends them. It is universal; the fulness or plenitude of knowledge.

1. God's knowledge as universal is primarily his knowledge of himself, the absolute and all-perfect personal Spirit. He is self-conscious. This includes the knowledge of himself as the absolute Reason; therein of all the principles, laws, ideals, and ends of the absolute and all-perfect Reason, and of the archetype of the universe accordant with them; also the knowledge of himself as almighty and free will, choosing in eternal harmony with Reason this archetype of eternal truth, right, perfection, and good, to be realized in his revelation of himself in the forms of the finite. This eternal choice in harmony with Reason is love; and his knowledge, thus vitalized with love and guiding his creative and self-revealing action, is wisdom.

2. God's knowledge as universal is also his knowledge of all that is possible in any imaginable universe, and of all that is actual in himself and the existing universe.[1]

God's knowledge of the possible is his knowledge of all that is possible for almighty power to effect if God so willed. Nothing finite is possible in itself, but only as a result, immediate or remote, of the action of God. But the universe is ultimately grounded in Reason, pervaded by it, through and through intelligible and explicable to it. In such a universe what is possible and impossible cannot be defined from power alone. We may suppose, indeed, that God knows what it would be possible for almighty power to effect if unregulated by Reason. But he knows also that in fact no such absolute almighty power exists or can exist. Power as unintelligent force, or irrational caprice, or wickedness defiant of rational truth and law, cannot be absolute and unconditioned. Eternally the absolute Being is absolute Spirit. This alone can be the absolute, the unconditioned, the all-conditioning. In this alone is power almighty; and it is power enlightened and regulated by Reason, energizing only within the bounds of Reason; it is Reason itself energizing, and it cannot reveal itself as un-reason. Therefore what is possible for almighty power to effect is determined by the Reason. This

[1] This has been the common classification in theology. The former has been variously designated as Scientia simplicis intelligentiae, Scientia indefinita, Scientia necessaria, Scientia naturalis; the latter as Scientia visionis, Scientia definita, Scientia libera.

determination of the possible by Reason is twofold. First, it determines a complete impossibility. No power as such, however great in quantity, can annul the principles and laws, the ideals of perfection, the norms of worth and good, the distinction of the absolute and the finite, which are eternal and immutable in the absolute Reason and are the constituent elements of all reason; nor cause anything the existence of which is absurd. No power, even though almighty, can cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time, or produce a beginning or change of motion without a cause, or make a triangle whose three angles should be equal to six right angles, or construct a circle with the radii unequal, or make selfishness to be right, obligatory, and promotive of well-being, or universal love to be wrong, deserving punishment, and destructive of the universal well-being. Thus the universe is grounded in absolute Reason and constituted according to its eternal truths and laws, its ideals of perfection, and its norms of worth and well-being. These encompass it as with flaming walls which no power, not even the almighty, can break through or overpass. Here the principles of reason determine what is a complete impossibility to power. Secondly, the almighty power of God is regulated by his eternal love. A free will endowed with almighty power, if considered abstracted from everything else, may be conceived as refusing to conform its action with the law of love and using its almightiness in doing evil. Finite persons, beginning undeveloped and under the necessity of forming character, may sin. But God's will is fixed in love by his eternal free choice. This eternal love is the infallible guarantee that the power in the universe which alone is almighty will always be exercised in wisdom and love. God's knowledge of the possible, therefore, is the knowledge, not only of what an almighty will unregulated by reason might do, but also of all which it is possible for almightiness to effect in consistency with God's absolute reason and with his eternal and all-encompassing wisdom and love.

God's knowledge of the actual is his knowledge of all that has been, is, or will be, as the result, immediate or remote, of the action of God's will in the exercise of his almighty power. It is his knowledge of the universe itself, the ever-dependent product of his creative and energizing will progressively realizing, in the limits of dependence and of time, space, and quantity, the archetype eternal in the divine Reason.

The knowledge of the actual, in popular usage, is called fore-knowledge. This name is misleading, and has occasioned mistakes and needless objections. It assumes a point in time from which God is supposed to look forward to the future. But, in fact, God's knowledge of the actual, that is, of the finite, is his eternal knowledge of the universe as conditioned in time and space, of all finite things in their dates and successions in time and in their positions and motions in space, consequently of the present and the past as well as of the future.

An objection is urged that, if God foreknows only finite reality resulting immediately or remotely from the determination of his will, that determination must itself have been made blindly, without knowledge. What has been said exposes the futility of this objection. The creative energy of the divine will is put forth in the light of his reason, realizing the eternal archetype which his Reason sees to be accordant with his perfect wisdom and love.

3. God's knowledge of the actual includes his eternal knowledge of actions of free agents. This has been strenuously denied.

The first refutation of this denial is that it flatly contradicts the revelation of God recorded in the Bible. The Bible teaches that God not only foreknows, but in many cases has foretold the actions of men; yet it recognizes the freedom and responsibility of the agents fulfilling the prophecies. The biblical representation corresponds throughout with the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." And God is revealed in the Bible as not only foreknowing and foretelling the actions of free agents, but also as knowing what, under different circumstances, they would have done but never did; as David was told from Jehovah that if he remained in Keilah the men of the city would deliver him up to Saul.

The second refutation of this denial is that it contradicts what is essential in the idea of God. It involves the denial of God's omniscience. If God does not know the action of free agents, and know them as in time, past, present, or future, his knowledge is not universal. Millions of free agents are constantly acting; and God never knows what any one of them will be doing the

next minute. Thus he is always acting in the dark; is every moment getting knowledge of innumerable facts of which he had been ignorant, and must often be surprised at what he had not anticipated.[1] Thus God, the absolute, in his knowledge is always limited and conditioned in time. The objection is therefore incompatible with the essential idea of God as the absolute Spirit.

The denial further involves insuperable difficulties as to God's universal government. In the light of the principles, laws, ideals, and norms of reason, he forms an archetypal plan of what, in his perfect wisdom and love, he fain would realize. But, on account of his total ignorance of what the free agents constituting the moral system may do, his plan is liable to be frustrated in any part or even as a whole at every moment. He brings rational persons into existence in a moral system to be illuminated and guided by his wisdom and to be the recipients of his love; and he does not know but that every one of them will at once sin against him and continue in sin forever. He comes in Christ and his Spirit to redeem them from sin; but he does not know that a single one for whom Christ died will accept him and be saved. He completes the work of redemption and gathers his redeemed in heaven; and he does not know but that every one of them will at the next moment sin and thus turn heaven into hell. He is trying a tremendous experiment with no certainty that it will not issue in the endless sin and misery of every rational creature.

A third answer is that the denial that God can foreknow the acts of rational free agents rests on the false assumption that the mode in which God knows is the same with the modes of human knowledge. For example, Martensen says: "Only that reality which is *per se* rational and necessary can be the object of an unconditional foreknowledge, but not that reality which might have been otherwise than as it is." Rothe says: "Thought can foreknow with absolute certainty only the absolutely necessary." Weisse says: "Only so far as it follows with organic necessity out of the past and the present." And Rothe says that any man

[1] In reply to the question: "If God foreknew that man would sin, why did he create him?" Rothe answers that God did not know it, and in the nature of the case it could not be foreknown. Julius Müller asked if Rothe really meant that God gained new knowledge in every act of man, and Rothe replies without hesitation that he does mean this.

from the known character of a person can conjecture how he will act. But so long as his "freedom is not yet ripened beyond all subjective discretion," so long as "he has not attained a perfectly ripened character," it remains conjecture, not real knowledge. God is capable of such a precalculation of the actions of such moral beings, but cannot have certain knowledge of them. But, according to Rothe, God can foreknow with certainty the acts of a morally perfected free agent, because such a being will always act right; and because in such a being freedom has passed beyond all discretionary liberty, and has "become absolutely identical with necessity." To this last position of Rothe it is a sufficient answer that it inevitably requires the preposterous inference that when a person has become perfect in love to God and man, when he no longer obeys the precepts of the law piecemeal from the fear of punishment or the sense of obligation, but in the spontaneity and enthusiasm of love, when, as a rational personal free agent, he has attained his highest and normal development, then he is no longer a free agent, or, what is the same, a rational personal being, but thenceforward, "like dumb, driven cattle," acts only under necessity. It identifies all right moral character with necessity, and declares it incompatible with free will. It inevitably requires also the inference that God, who is eternally perfect in love, cannot be free, but is eternally subject, like the gods of the heathen, to fate. And besides this, in all those positions it is assumed that the methods of God's knowing must be limited so as to be the same as those by which man acquires knowledge; that his knowledge of man's free acts is, like human sense-perception, dependent on the person's actual doing of the act and its presentation or revelation of itself from without to God's observation; that God acquires knowledge through processes of thought; that he infers man's action, as an effect from a cause, from his character; that his inference is sometimes merely conjectural, sometimes a conclusive certainty. But God's knowledge transcends man's and all the processes through which man proceeds laboriously and doubtfully to his conclusion. God in his absolute, self-dependent knowledge may know the future in intuition, seeing into future time as we see events in space. This is the common scriptural representation. "There is no creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

The objector also confounds the inconceivable with the unknowable. He is trying to conceive of God's knowledge in imagination, to picture God's eternal knowledge in the forms of time. Thus he disregards a fundamental maxim of theology, that God as the absolute Being cannot be pictured in the imagination. Mystery rests all along the line at which the absolute reveals itself in the finite. The revelation is always through the veil.

A fourth line of refutation of the denial that God can foreknow the actions of free agents is the fact that the arguments by which this denial is supported, being founded on misapprehension, are totally fallacious.

The leading argument in support of this denial of foreknowledge is that God cannot foreknow the acts of rational persons because his foreknowledge would be incompatible with free will both in God and man. "The affirmation of an unconditional foreknowledge of everything yet to come, though made with as much assurance as by Augustine himself ('if not foreknowing all things future, he is not God at all'), is, say what one will, nothing but positive and glaring determinism, — a determinism which precludes the freedom of God in his own future acts, and which annuls the freedom of created beings when applied to all their future acts." [1] And Rothe says: "If God foreknows absolutely everything as absolutely determined from all eternity, the necessary presupposition is . . . . that everything is absolutely necessary. It may be said that it is by God himself that all is thus absolutely fixed. But this does not save the freedom of God. It only establishes that God himself from eternity has subjected himself to an unalterable necessity, has himself set a Fate on the throne over himself, and thus has renounced what belongs essentially to the idea of God . . . . This would imply that God had retained for himself through the whole course of the development of the universe only the intolerable tediousness of idle looking on." [2]

In effect the argument is that, if God could foreknow an act of any rational person, he would cease to be God. The logical conclusion would be practically atheism.

[1] Ch. H. Weisse, "Philosophische Dogmatik," vol. i. p. 609; Augustine, "Civitas Dei," Lib. v. cap. 9.

[2] Theologische Ethik, 2d ed., vol. i. pp. 231, 232, § 54. For the argument supporting this objection, see pp. 211–234; also Martensen, "Die Christliche Dogmatik," pp. 193, 244–257, 415.

We may now see that this argument from the incompatibility of God's foreknowledge of human actions with free will is founded on misconceptions and has no reasonable basis. It necessarily implies that thought carries in itself causal efficiency. God has in the light of eternal Reason the archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe and he is immanently active in the universe in the progressive realization of this ideal. His knowledge of the thoughts, actions and characters of his rational creatures is no hindrance to his continued action among and on them in the fulness of his love. An architect plans a building to its minutest details. If he could foresee with absolute certainty that he would procure the necessary material, employ and direct skilled workmen and finish the building as planned to its minutest details, this knowledge would not supersede his own continuous activity in its erection nor hinder the constant exercise of his free will in his work, but would stimulate and encourage him in it. And if this is true even of a finite man much more is it possible for the infinite God. He has in his mind the archetypal plan of the universe, he knows that the universe will be developed in accordance with it, and he is continuously active in progressively realizing it. And all his action is in the continuous exercise of his own free will in free accordance with his eternal free choice of the archetypal ideal of the universe, to be realized in its creation and evolution.

Nor does the fact that God knows the actual, past, present, and future, annul or abridge the free agency of finite rational beings. It rather insures and perpetuates it. Otherwise God's ideal contemplating the development of the kingdom of God consisting of rational persons in the exercise of free will serving God and one another in love, must fail of realization. Nothing higher than impersonal matter would exist. The denial of God's foreknowledge rests on the gross error that knowledge carries in its essence efficient causation and the determination of will by such causation. But the mere subjective certainty of any mind that an event will happen exerts no causal energy in causing or hindering it. As Origen says, "God's foreknowledge is not the cause of things future, but their being future is the cause of God's foreknowledge."

If I know that my neighbor will go to his counting room to-morrow morning, this knowledge would be no hindrance to

his freedom in going. And yet, according to the objection, my certainty determines his action in absolute fixedness and annuls his freedom. If I look down from a steeple and see the people acting below, my knowledge of their action in no way affects their power or freedom. And if I had the power to look forward into time as I can look outward into space, and see actions now future, my seeing them would not affect the power or freedom of the actors. So God's knowledge of men's future action, simply as knowledge, cannot abridge their power or annul their freedom. In fact, it is true to-day that certain acts will be done to-morrow by a certain person at certain definite points of time and space; and it is equally true, whether any mind knows it or not. And if any mind attains to-day subjective certainty that this is true, the certainty does not in the least affect the freedom of the agent. The futurition of the event is objectively certain, whether any mind knows it or not. The subjective certainty of a mind that discovers it does not make the futurition of the event any more sure and fixed than it was before. But according to Rothe this fixed objective certainty or futurition of an act destroys its freedom. It necessarily would follow that all future acts of free agents are necessary and under fate, whether any mind foreknows them or not. Therefore it is an unwarranted assumption that God's foreknowledge of the action of a free agent would destroy the agent's freedom.

The objection rests on a further misconception of the relation of God's action, in realizing his archetypal plan, to the foreseen action of men, as if it permitted no adaptation to their action. God's foreknowledge of the acts of free agents has been urged as proof of the supralapsarian doctrine of predestination unconditioned by any act of man. Foreknowledge is denied in order to nullify this argument. We now see that God's foreknowledge of man's free action does not imply this predestination. The archetype of perfection and well-being which God is progressively realizing is not an arbitrary decree of naked and resistless will. It is chosen in the light of reason to be realized by divine action in exact accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason. God knows that all rational persons who come into existence in the moral system must be finite, and must be progressively educated and developed under divine influences adapted to their degree of development and their attainments in

knowledge. He knows what they will do under his gracious influences. He knows that a person's character and action can be determined only by the person himself; that no external power, though almighty, can determine them or change the person's determination. For it would be determination by the external power, not by the man himself. And he exerts on every person, to induce him to live the life of love, every influence which perfect wisdom, righteousness, and good-will permit or require. Thus his eternal knowledge of their acts does not interfere either with their freedom or his own. He simply adapts his action in wisdom, righteousness, and good-will, to the character, condition, development, and needs of each one.

We suppose that, in God's eternal archetype of the universe, he knows not only all that finite persons will do but also all which they would do under different circumstances and a different development of the universe; that if God had seen that the conduct of his rational creatures in the existing universe would be such as to make his action in it to fail to be the expression of perfect wisdom and love, he would have proceeded in some other line of action which would insure their perfect expression; that, foreseeing the action of his rational creatures, he plans his own action in reference to theirs, so that it shall be the perfect though progressive expression of his wisdom and love; and that thus the universe and all creatures in it never escape his control but are ever within his power and cannot frustrate his plan to realize his archetypal ideal. But Rothe insists that such reference to the action of his creatures would "involve a total reversal of the relation of dependence between God and the creature. Thus the attempt to guard the absoluteness of God actually results in sacrificing it altogether." This is of equal force against the moral government of God, declaring his law and explicitly awarding blessing to the obedient and condemnation and punishment to the disobedient. It is of equal force against God's redemption of men from sin through Christ, in which he justifies and glorifies those who accept his freely-offered grace and, trusting in God, live the life of Christian love, and condemns and punishes those who reject his grace and persist in sin. Thus God determines his own action in accordance with the action of man, and so, according to Rothe, God's moral government and his redemption of men from sin in their very essence "involve a total reversal of the relation of dependence

between God and the creature." His argument implies that if God determines any act with reference to the action or character of a finite person, as for example condemning a sinner for his sins, God would be therein dependent on and conditioned by the creature. Therefore Rothe's objection, if valid, proves the impossibility of God's exerting any influence on men adapted to their needs, either in moral government under law or in redeeming them from sin. He also overlooks the dependence of the creature on God, and God's immanence and action in the universe continually. On the contrary, as Lotze says, "we cannot mean that the images of different worlds were present and known to God as being *in themselves* possible or impossible;"[1] but only as dependent on God and by virtue of principles, laws, ideals, and norms, eternal in the absolute reason, and of the harmony of his will with them in his eternal free choice and in all his action in time. Thus freedom of will is essential and inseparable from the rational and moral constitution of a person; it persists unchanged through all his action, right or wrong, and through all changes and conditions. And yet the person is always dependent on God for his being and his continued existence and for the gracious offers and influences of God's love. If he chooses wrong he can never thus realize his perfection and true good, but will find that what he wilfully chose as the good is only evil, and that he cannot frustrate God's plan of expressing and revealing in the universe his perfect wisdom and love. Whatever the man does, God's action in reference to it will be the expression of perfect wisdom and love. Therefore the freedom of the man, however he may act in the exercise of it, does not imply the man's independence of God; and God's wise adaptation of his action in relation to the man's development, character and action, does not imply any dependence of God on the creature or any limitation of his absoluteness. Rothe admits "God has this self-subsistent world absolutely within his power in all its points and moments. . . . While God concedes to personal creatures the free unfolding of the capacity of self-development implanted in them by himself, he still holds them in the hand of his all-seeing omnipotence, from which, notwithstanding their freedom, they cannot escape." This admission takes away the foundation on which the objection rests. And this Rothe

[1] Microcosmus, trans. vol. ii. p. 705.

himself would have seen, if he had clearly seen in what freedom of will consists and what is the true relation of God's archetypal knowledge to the action of free agents. In view of the fact that some will sin, God proceeds with reference to them in a method different from what would have been his method of procedure if they had not sinned. But he nevertheless fully acts out his divine perfections and realizes the archetypal plan of his eternal wisdom and love.

When the misconceptions and false assumptions of the objection are removed, the antinomy which it presents is dissolved.

A further answer is that the objector, in evading the argument that the denial of foreknowledge of the acts of free agents is a denial of God's omniscience, is driven to positions which are untenable and involve contradictions.

When it is urged that the denial of foreknowledge is the denial of God's omniscience, and thus implies that he is limited and dependent, some writers have answered that God might know the acts of free agents, but does not choose to know them. But choosing not to know them implies some knowledge of them as a reason for the choice. If I choose not to read the columns of crimes and casualties in the morning paper, it is because I have knowledge of their general character and wish to avoid the suffering which the reading of them would cause. Besides this, the choosing not to know the acts of free agents would imply moral weakness and delinquency. It represents God as thinking that if he allowed himself to know the acts of free agents he might find it necessary to change his own plan of action to prevent them. This would be charging God with a cowardly and wilful shutting of his eyes to the consequences of his action. And, after all, the denial of omniscience remains unrelieved and God's knowledge would always be incomplete and he would be always learning.

A more respectable attempt to evade this difficulty is in the position that the action of free agents through all time is not a legitimate object of knowledge; that, therefore, ignorance of them is not a limitation of knowledge; and it is claimed that this is analogous with the fact that the giving of reality to what is absurd is not a legitimate act of power. But there is no analogy here. Knowledge and causal energy are different in kind; they move

in different planes. It is impossible to move a stone by an argument, or to draw an inference by a steam-engine, or to annul a principle of reason by an explosion of dynamite, or to make a machine which gives reality to a contradiction. On the contrary, the acts of free agents are known, and therefore are in their nature legitimate objects of knowledge. It may now be said that a future act of a free agent is not yet done, and therefore is not a legitimate object of knowledge, which is the intellectual equivalent of reality. But an eclipse foreknown for next year has not yet taken place, and therefore for the same reason would not be a legitimate object of knowledge. The objection rests entirely on the misleading word, foreknowledge. Let us return to the theological designation, the knowledge of the actual or real. Both the eclipse and the act of the free agent are actual or real events in time, and are known as such. The fact that they are known as actual or real in a future time does not change their essence as knowable. In fact all legislation, all laws of trade and political economy, all education, all domestic arrangements, all travelling, all the practical arrangements of society and management of the affairs of personal life, assume that the future acts of men are legitimate objects of knowledge, and depend on man's confidence that he knows them. If God were obliged to act in total ignorance of them, he could not act with unerring wisdom. And if human knowledge of the future acts of free agents is sufficient to be the safe guide of human action, certainly these acts are legitimate objects of knowledge, and it is reasonable to believe that God may know them all with certainty without impairing the free will of the agents.

It is evident, therefore, that the denial of God's knowledge of all the acts of free agents is, after all attempts to evade the conclusion, a direct denial of God's omniscience and, by necessary inference, of his perfectly wise universal government, and consequently the denial that he is the absolute, unconditioned, and all-conditioning Being.

Equally evident is the utter invalidity of the argument of a class of theologians, affirming God's eternal knowledge of the acts and characters of rational free agents, that this foreknowledge proves the supralapsarian doctrine of God's universal, absolute decree of salvation or reprobation unconditioned by any foreseen action of man.

4. Here we see the importance of recognizing, as the fundamental principle of all true theology, the truth that the universe is ultimately grounded in Reason, not in Will independent of reason and above it. The latter of these two doctrines assumes, as the ultimate ground of the universe, an almighty power conscious of itself as almighty, and exerting its almightiness in arbitrary caprice unregulated by any truth or law of Reason. The conception of the universe grounded in almighty caprice is the most terrific conception which the human imagination can form.

It is a common misrepresentation of theism that its fundamental principle is precisely this assertion of the supremacy of almighty will independent of reason, and unregulated by any rational truth, or law, or end. The arguments against theism very often have this misrepresentation for their only foundation. Mr. Spencer says: "Religious creeds, established and dissenting, all embody the belief that right and wrong are right and wrong simply in virtue of divine enactment."[1] Miss Martineau says: "When we have finally dismissed all notions of subjection to a superior lawless will — all the perplexing notions about sin and responsibility and arbitrary reward and punishment — and stand free to see where we are, and to study our own nature and recognize our own condition, the relief is like that of coming out of a cave full of painted shadows, under the free sky with the earth open round about us to the horizon."[2]

Theologians, it must be acknowledged, have given some occasion for this misrepresentation. They have defined God's knowledge of the possible with reference to almighty power only. From the time of Duns Scotus the doctrine gained currency that God's will is absolute and supreme, independent of and above reason and all laws and principles of reason; that the distinction of right and wrong in the moral law depends solely on the sovereign enactment of God's will, and virtue is right solely because God commands it. And this type of thought did not entirely pass away in the Protestant Reformation. Turretin says, "No conditioned future event can be knowable apart from God's decree." He had explained just before that by "decree" he means, not God's generic purpose, but his special decree of the particular

[1] Data of Ethics, p. 50.

[2] Martineau and Atkinson, "Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development," p. 219.

event.[1] Descartes says, "God did not will that the three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles because he knew it could not possibly be otherwise. But because he willed that the three angles of a triangle should be necessarily equal to two right angles, therefore this is now true; and so of other things."[2] This doctrine has not even now entirely disappeared in Christian theology. Mohammedism regards God as omnipotent lawless will-power, and so sinks into practical fatalism. Similar must be the issue of any doctrine of God's universal foreknowledge which rests on the assumption that the universe is grounded in absolute will-power independent of reason. Such a power in fact could not be a free will. It is of the essence of free will that it acts in the light of the truths and laws of reason, which cannot be annulled by any causal efficiency, whether conscious or unconscious. But the conception of the supremacy of will independent of reason is entirely foreign from theism. It would be as reasonable to teach that the truth of any theorem of geometry is dependent on a fiat of will. Theism teaches that the principles and laws of reason are not external to or independent of and above God; also that they are not caused by his will or dependent on it; but are eternal in God, the absolute Reason. Then God knows all that is possible, not merely as dependent on his power, but as determined by the truths and laws, the ideals of perfection, and norms of worth, which condition all efficient power and are eternal in God, the absolute Reason. In this sense the words of Calvin are true: "Nowhere will be found one drop of wisdom and light, or of justice, or of power, or of rectitude, or of pure truth, which does not flow from God."[3] From this point of view God's knowledge, at once archetypal and universal, is consistent with his own eternal freedom and with the freedom of all rational beings. From this point of view we must assume that there is known to God a sufficient reason in his perfect wisdom and love for all his actions; that his will, illuminated with the light of reason and in harmony with its principles and laws in love, always acts in perfect freedom; and that in all his action he respects the inviolable freedom and moral responsibility of his rational creatures.

[1] Inst. Theol., Locus III. Quaest. xiii.; Opera, vol. i. p. 194.
[2] Responsiones, § 6.
[3] Institutes, Bk. I. chap. ii. 1.

III. God's Knowledge is Perfect as Knowledge. — As such it must have the following characteristics.

It is certainty of knowledge, excluding doubt, presumption, conjecture, and probability.

It is clear and definite, excluding obscurity and indistinctness. A person may pass a building every day; yet if he should attempt to draw a plan of it in all its details, and with mathematical exactness, he would find himself continually at a loss. A person cannot recall his own thoughts for half an hour with completeness and accuracy in their order. A person's knowledge of what he supposes himself to know most intimately is always more or less indefinite and inexact. God's knowledge of any object is always clear, exact, and complete.

It is correct or true, excluding all error.

God's knowledge is immediate or intuitive. His knowledge is not presented to him through a sensorium or any medium. It is not acquired by any process of investigation or reasoning; he does not know by inference. He knows all the real relations of beings by which they exist in the unity of a system and are comprehended in a unity of thought, but he does not pass through the processes of observation, investigation, and argument by which man discovers them.

God's knowledge is individualizing, and not by abstraction and generalization. He knows all the resemblances and relations by which man classifies objects and comprehends them under general notions and designates them by general names. But he has no need to resort to these expedients in order to know them. The Bible represents God's knowledge of his creatures as so intimate that he calleth them all by name. Isaiah, speaking of the stars, says: "He bringeth forth their host by number; he calleth them all by name;" [1] like a numbered and enrolled army, answering to their names at the roll-call. The prophet also represents God as a shepherd tenderly caring for each one in his flock according to its peculiar needs.[2] And our Saviour illustrates his own care of his people by the same comparison with a shepherd, who "calleth his own sheep by name." [3] Man can have such individualizing knowledge of very few objects. We know by name a few familiar acquaintances, a few pet animals. The most are known only in

[1] Isaiah xl. 26.
[2] Isaiah xl. 11.
[3] John x. 3, 4.

general as men, horses, dogs. Even science makes little attempt to know individuals by name. Astronomy, though dealing with worlds, names only the planets of the solar system and a few of the stars. Already the asteroids are so numerous that only a professional astronomer attempts to know their names; the fixed stars have to be grouped in constellations and designated by letters and numbers. And when we come to the Milky Way, where suns seem drifted together like snow, all attempts at naming them or even grouping them in constellations cease. The other sciences make no attempt to call individuals by name. The most learned botanist or zoologist knows the plants and animals only in their genera and species. If we should attempt to know all things in their individuality, every beast and bird, every tree and every leaf and every blade of grass, every pebble and every insect, our minds would be overwhelmed by the multiplicity, no memory could learn the names, we should be unable not only to communicate thought, but even to think. Therefore we must resort to an expedient. We bring resembling objects into groups and designate them by a common name. We bring them together into a bundle and bind the bundles with the names. Then we can apprehend them in thought and pass them from one to another in speech. It marks the greatness of man that he is thus able to form a language and so lift himself out from the overwhelming multiplicity of things; that his thought can thus get the mastery of the universe, can apprehend it in its multitudinousness and complexity, and possess and communicate the knowledge of it. But while this power is proof of man's greatness and of his pre-eminence above other terrestrial beings, it reveals his limitation and feebleness in comparison with God. His strength is weakness. We now see the significance of the biblical representation of God's knowledge as individualizing objects, calling them all by name. It uses even more wonderful representations: he clothes the lily with its beauty; not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice; the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God's knowledge, as archetypal, universal, and individualizing, cannot be pictured in our imagination. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." [1]

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 6.

IV. The Constitution of the Universe. — The phrase, the constitution of the universe, or its equivalent, the constitution of things, is in common use in philosophy and theology. When a fact cannot be more specifically accounted for, it is often said to be according to the constitution of things. The expression often floats in indefiniteness, and is sometimes no more than a sounding phrase used as a cover of ignorance. It is even used to account for God's action; he acts according to the constitution of things, as if this constitution were independent of God, determining his action. We are now able to apprehend it in its definite meaning.

1. The constitution of the universe is the archetypal ideal of God progressively expressed or realized in it. The archetype of the universe is eternal in the mind of God. It is the archetype of all that is accordant with the eternal truths and laws of reason and realizes its ideals of perfection and of the good or well-being which, estimated by the norms of reason, has true worth and is worthy of the pursuit and enjoyment of a rational person. This archetype is not itself a creation of God's will. It is equally true that it is not external to God and independent of him. God in his consciousness of himself is conscious of all the principles, laws, and ideals of reason, as constituent and eternal elements of his own reason, and so is conscious of himself as the absolute Reason. Therefore, these principles, laws, ideals, and norms of reason are not independent of God and external to him. And they are not mere abstractions. They are concrete as constituent elements of the absolute Reason, the guiding lights of the divine intelligence and action, and are real with all the reality of God, the ultimate ground of the reality of the universe. But the constitution and evolution of the universe, progressively realizing this archetypal ideal, is dependent on God and caused by the free action of God's will. This archetype has been freely and eternally chosen by him, among all possible conceptions of a finite universe, as the one accordant with eternal Reason and presenting the highest ideals of perfection and well-being possible to be progressively realized in accordance with the principles and laws of reason in a finite universe and in the forms of space and time. Therefore, while the truths and laws of reason are eternal, immutable and uncreated in God as the absolute Reason, they are the truths and laws in accordance with which, in the exercise of his almightiness, God freely determines to act, the ideals and ends to which he

freely determines to direct his action in constituting and evolving the universe. He freely bows and controls his almightiness into conformity with the truths and laws of reason in the progressive realization of its archetypal ideal. Thus this archetypal ideal becomes the constitution of the universe. It is the mode in which God in his almightiness acts, the plan of perfect wisdom and love which he is progressively realizing. The universe in its constitution and evolution reveals, as its fundamental reality, God the absolute Reason, and the almighty Power acting in harmony with reason.

2. As thus constituted the universe has a dependent but actual reality in itself. God knows the archetype of the universe subjective and uncreated in his own self-conscious Reason. He knows the universe, not as his subjective thought nor as identical with his own subjective action, but as the objective reality brought into being by his own causal energy and realizing his archetypal thought in finite beings in the forms of space and time. The universe, therefore, is the objective reality on which he exerts his power, the plastic medium in which he expresses his thought; and by using its energies he progressively realizes in it the ideals of his wisdom and love. It is the mirror in which God sees and reveals his own image; for he sees in it, in progressive realization, the archetype of his own perfect wisdom and love, and therein sees, objectively expressed, what he himself is as absolute Reason, and what he is as almighty Will acting freely in harmony with Reason.

God creates matter and endows it with its interacting forces so that it is real being and is capable of real interactive energy in the chain of causes and effects which we call the course of nature. Thus he constitutes the physical system. Immanent in this, God acts on it and through its agencies and energies, directing its evolution and more and more revealing his archetypal thought in it as it becomes susceptible of higher manifestations of his wisdom and power. And thus every molecule in it, every unit of force, by whatever name called, is a real recipient and a real agent, on and by which God acts in realizing his archetypal thought, and thus more and more revealing himself in the progressive development of the system. God also creates personal beings. Each of these is a real individual being, a sub-creative centre of intelligence and energy, on and through whom God by

his spiritual influences is advancing his kingdom and revealing the higher ends of his wisdom and love.

3. Because the universe is thus constituted it is symbolic, it is the expression of thought. It is so as a whole, in its archetypal idea. It is so in all its parts, even in the ultimate units or constituents of matter. Six hundred years ago some architectural genius made the plan of the cathedral in Cologne. The building was finished only a few years ago. In the process of building it through these centuries it has been progressively realizing and revealing the thought or plan of the architect. At the outset, material suitable for the plan of the structure must be selected. Then the material selected must be fitted to its position and use in the building. Both the selection and shaping of the material and the fitting of it into the building in its progressive construction must be guided by the archetypal thought of the architect. According to this analogy, we think of God as first bringing into being the matter of which the world was to be made. But from all kinds of material seen by omniscience to be possible, that only must be chosen which would be suitable for realizing the archetype of perfect wisdom and love. This, again, in all its parts must be adapted to its place and use in the universe as it is constituted and developed according to the archetypal plan. Thus every constituent element of the universe, every molecule in it must have been fitted for its place and purpose in harmony with the constituent elements of Reason, which are the principles, laws, and ideals constituent of the universe; it is therefore significant of rational thought, and reveals something of the archetypal plan of the absolute Reason.

> "Mirrors God maketh all atoms in space,
> And fronteth each one with his perfect face."
>
> "Though God extends beyond creation's rim,
> Each smallest atom shows the whole of him."[1]

Thus the deepest significance, as well as the deepest reality, of the world, is in the fact that it is the realization of the archetype of God's eternal reason expressing in it his perfect wisdom and love. This is why it is intelligible through and through, and when we investigate it we find that its intellectual equivalent as

[1] W. R. Alger, "The Poetry of the East," pp. 109, 165.

we apprehend it in our knowledge is rational science. Scientists explore the universe intent only on finding the actual facts and substantial reality of it; and what they find in it is reality constituted according to the most exact scientific thought. Science finds that every sun, every planet, every atom, in every movement is regulated by exact, unchanging law. The ideal is revealed in the real and gives it its scientific explanation. Every individual thing, in itself and in its relations to other things, and the universe as a whole, each and all reveal the principles and laws, the ideals and norms of reason, embodied in the material and the real. The very names which the intensest realism of science must use to designate the fundamental realities of the universe are metaphysical, as atom, molecule, force, ether; and its ultimate principles, whether mathematical or philosophical, are ideal. Modern science is demonstrating that an irremovable basis for the real in the universe can be found only in the ideal, unchangeable in a mind behind the universe.

> "Forever through the world's material forms
> Heaven shoots the immaterial; night and day
> Apocalyptic intimations stray
> Across the rifts of matter."

A man is limited to a spot in space and a moment in time. Yet in his small eye he takes in and sees at a glance the whole expanse of the starry heaven. And with the eye of reason man sees in and behind the starry heaven, and, ever present in and coincident with it, the sphere of the invisible, the spiritual and supernatural, the eternal Reason, and in it the eternal truths and laws, the ideals of perfection and norms of worth, the eternal archetype of wisdom and love, of which the universe is the progressive realization and revelation. Whatever is perceived through the senses may also be apprehended in the unchanging forms of reason, and thus known as a symbol or revelation of the eternal thought of God, — a point of light in which the spiritual and divine shines out upon us like a single star shining out of the darkness and revealing the immensity of the universe.

> "Two worlds are ours; 't is only sin
> Forbids us to descry
> The mystic heaven and earth within,
> Plain as the sea and sky.

"Thou who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out thee
And read thee everywhere."[1]

Vaughan presents a similar conception, which may have suggested to Wordsworth his famous "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood": —

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy; . . .
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back at that short space
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity; . . .
And felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

Silex Scintillans: The Retreat.

Accordingly Christ spoke for all time in parables, setting forth the ideal in the real. And language transfers the names of physical things and powers to the spiritual realities which they symbolize, and therefore has been significantly called "fossil poetry."

Pure theism compared with Christianity is sometimes spoken of disparagingly, as if of little worth and poor in spiritual truth. But pure theism is the basis of the realism of all science, and of its possibility as science; it illuminates all science and all human history and reveals their deepest significance, and all science and all human history enrich it with their treasures. We must know the whole universe in order to know all the contents of pure theism. And we must know God in order to understand aright the universe or anything in it.

4. Because the constitution of the universe is the archetypal thought of God, it is ordered under law; and the law of its being, action, and development is the archetypal truths eternal in God, the absolute Reason.

These are the laws of nature in the true meaning of that phrase. Because physical things and powers in nature have no choice, its constitution according to the principles, laws, ideals,

[1] Keble, "Christian Year."

and ends of reason insures in it continuity and uniformity of sequence. Its factual and uniform sequences are commonly but incorrectly called the laws of nature. The true laws of nature are inherent in the constitution of the physical system, and are the principles eternal in God, the absolute Reason, and realized and revealed in nature. The uniform sequences are merely observed facts in which the conformity of the course of nature and the action of physical forces with the laws of reason is manifested.

The law of love, which is the law of all rational beings, is also inherent in the constitution of the moral or spiritual system, and eternal in the absolute Reason. Because rational persons are free agents, the moral law does not insure the certainty of their uniform obedience to it. Some of them may sin. The fact that men sin is not an absurdity; it is accounted for by the fact that they are finite free agents. But the sinner can be justified to reason only on the supposition that a life of selfishness is in eternal harmony with the truths and laws of absolute reason, and essential to the realization of God's archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being. This supposition is absurd. In a life of selfishness the sinner puts himself in opposition to the constitution of the universe, and to the eternal principles and laws of the absolute Reason. There is no place nor time in the universe in which a person may realize his perfection and well-being in a life of selfishness. If there were, the universe would no longer be grounded in absolute Reason, but would sink into chaos. The law of love is in the spiritual system analogous to the law of gravitation in the physical. It is designed to bind all in harmony and unity, each individual being attracted by and attracted to every other, and all moving each in his appropriate orbit around the central "Sun of Righteousness," attracted by God's love.

Thus the laws both of the physical system and of the spiritual are eternal in the absolute Reason and are the constitution of the universe. As Kant says: "Everything in nature acts according to laws; the distinction of a rational being is the power of acting in the consciousness of law." Because the principles and laws, as well as the ideals and worthy ends to be realized in both, are rational, the physical system according to its constitution must be subordinate to the spiritual and moral. It furnishes a place for rational beings to live in and powers and resources for their use; means of education, discipline, training, and development;

death itself is but an epoch in their development. Thus the physical and the spiritual are constituted in the unity of one system or universe accordant with rational principles and laws, and progressively realizing the archetypal ideal of the highest perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe according to the principles and laws of eternal Reason.

Professor Clifford says that religion requires chiefly the observance of rites, the neglect of which may be forgiven; on the contrary, he says, there can be no escape from the penalty of disregarding laws inherent in the constitution of things; and that, because it does not recognize these unchangeable laws, the influence of religion in promoting true morality is insignificant or even deleterious. [1] But we now see that the knowledge of God recognized in religion is just that which shows that the law of love is inherent in the constitution of the universe; and also just that which shows the true significance even of the laws of nature as anything more than factual sequences. They are eternal in God, the absolute Reason, and the universe is constituted and evolved in accordance with them. It follows as a fundamental principle, as we have already seen, that in a universe thus constituted according to the principles, laws, and ideals of the divine reason, one who lives a life of universal love exercised in righteousness must realize his highest perfection and well-being, and be working in harmony with God in progressively realizing the noblest ends; and every one who lives in supreme selfishness must miss his highest perfection and well-being and be working against God and against the constitution of the universe in bringing evil on himself and on others. But God ever encompasses the sinner with divine influences of good-will exercised in righteous conformity with the eternal truths and laws of reason, to induce him to repent and return to God in the life of love. When he begins this life of love he begins to undo the evil he has done and progressively to realize his highest perfection and well-being and to work in harmony with God in the advancement of his kingdom of universal love exercised in righteousness. Professor Clifford unwittingly declared the necessity of atonement in the remission of the penalty of transgression of the law. It is the essential atoning significance of God's redeeming grace in Christ that in thus redeeming the sinner from his selfishness

[1] The Ethics of Religion: Lectures and Essays, vol. ii. pp. 212-243.

and sin God does it in good-will exercised in righteousness, in exact conformity with the eternal truths, laws, and ideals of reason, and so with the constitution and evolution of the universe. Thus, in the redemption of the sinner from the life of selfishness to the life of love and the remission of the penalty to the sinner who repents, God maintains and vindicates the supreme and immutable authority of the law as really as in the punishment which, through the constitution of man and of the universe, he inflicts on the persisting sinner. God does not undo the evil already suffered and done by the sinner, for it is a fact of past history which no power can obliterate. But through the influences of his redeeming love the sinner has returned to God and so into harmony with the eternal law of reason and with the constitution of man and of the universe. Thus, in the new life of love, he begins to work with God for good, and, availing himself of God's never-ceasing gracious influences, gradually eliminates the evil and corruption which by sin he had brought into his own being, and ultimately realizes his own highest perfection and well-being. Thus the Christian revelation of God discloses law inherent in the constitution of the universe, which Professor Clifford, totally misrepresenting Christianity, regarded as foreign from its teaching and spirit. It also discloses the rational ground and necessity of this conception of the constitution of the universe.

5. Because the constitution of the universe is the archetypal thought of God accordant with the eternal and unchangeable principles, laws, ideals, and ends of reason, the realization of the archetype in the universe in the forms of space and time must be progressive and at every point of time incomplete.

The necessity of this progressiveness rests on the fundamental principles of reason, determining the constitution of the universe. It is a necessary principle of reason that absolute Being exists. It is equally a principle of reason that the absolute Being cannot create another absolute Being through whom and to whom he reveals himself. The supposition of two absolute Beings is absurd, because each would condition the other, and both would be finite. Then reason would demand the real absolute on whom both would depend. If, then, God reveals himself it can only be through the finite to the finite. But the absolute can never be commensurate with the finite nor be completely revealed in it.

If God reveals himself it must be in the finite, it must be progressive and at every point of time and at every limit of the finite incomplete. The assertion of the contrary is simply absurd, and its realization absolutely impossible even to almighty power. Science finds this progressiveness to be a fact. Independently of the theory of evolution, geology reads the history of the development of the earth recorded in its strata, and demonstrates that it has been progressive from lower to higher forms of being. And in the Bible the work of God in advancing his kingdom is progressive; the Saviour presents it as like an organic growth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." It is objected that God himself created the material on and through which he works. But this does not touch the point in question. The progressiveness does not rest on the fact that the existing material is limited here or there, but on the principle that, whatever it may be, it must be finite. This is involved in the constitution of the universe; and the constitution of the universe is the archetype accordant with all the principles, laws, ideals, and ends of absolute reason and expressing perfect wisdom and love.

This thought may be feebly illustrated from human art. By the vision and faculty divine of genius, an ideal flashes into the mind of a great artist, and as he sees it in the mental creation it seems an ideal of perfect beauty. But when, with material brush and paints, he would realize it on the canvas, he must begin with formless blotches and proceed with immeasurable painstaking to elaborate it to perfection. In the mental image it is perfect. In its realization it is progressive through imperfection. So the archetype of the universe is perfect in the eternal and divine reason; its realization in the finite is progressive through imperfection and at every point of time incomplete.[1]

[1] Professor Haeckel presents the following caricature as the actual teaching of theists on this point: "In the realm of biology, which is still governed by Teleology, and especially in the realm of Organic Morphology, we see the ridiculous arbitrary government of a personal and thoroughly humanlike creator, who vainly wearies himself in the endeavor to create a perfect organism and constantly rejects the earlier creations of a former age, because he is constantly setting up new and improved editions in their places. . . . He is . . . an architect, who is engaged in carrying on the construction of the world according to some plan, but who never gets done with it, because during the process of completion he is always hitting on

6. Therefore the universe at every point of time is typical and prophetic of a higher future. As revealing the archetypal thought of God it is the record of the past, symbolic in the present, typical and prophetic of the greater future. It is so in nature. The protozoa, at their appearance, are the type and prophecy of sensitive life in all the crowded realms of animal existence. The first vetebrate animal was the type and prophecy of multitudes of the same structure in higher species up to man. It is the same in human history. The first rude tribal or patriarchal government is the type and prophecy of the higher forms of national organization. History repeats itself. Hence there is in the constitution of the universe a basis for the types and prophecy of the Bible. David, the theocratic king of God's kingdom in its earlier period, is properly the type of the anointed one who is to come, the Christ. Elijah is the type and prophecy of John, coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. And the high priest and sacrifices of the temple worship are the type and prophecy of Christ, the true High Priest offering the true sacrifice for the sins of men. So in the scriptures the human family is a type of the family of God, and he describes himself by family relations, — the father, the husband. And because no one type is all-comprehending, the human commonwealth also is a type of the kingdom of God; God is the law-giver and king, and men are fellow-citizens in his kingdom. And all the pure natural affections of man, domestic and social, are types of the higher love and fellowship of the spiritual realm; the mother's love is a type of God's love to men. Redeemed humanity on earth is the type and prophecy of humanity glorified in heaven. There is nothing unnatural or forced in these interpretations. The universe itself, according to its constitution, is at every point of time the type and prophecy of something higher and greater in the future.

> "Only that which made us meant us to be mightier by and by,
> Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the human eye,
> Sent the shadow of himself, the Boundless, through the human soul,
> Boundless inward in the atom, Boundless outward in the Whole."[1]

new and better ideas." — Generelle Morphologie der Organismen, vol. ii. Bk. viii. chap. 30.

It would be as pertinent to sneer at an artist progressively expressing on the canvas the ideal of his genius, or at an architect progressively realizing his plan of a building, that he is continually changing his ideal or plan because he is continually getting new and better ideas.

[1] Tennyson, "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After."

V. Theistic Realism. — Realism is now used as the name of any theory purporting to present a reasonable basis for the reality of human knowledge. It is the opposite of idealism or phenomenalism. The reality of human knowledge cannot be proved by argument, because proof is possible only in the use of knowledge. The reality of knowledge is certified in the act of knowing. But the question arises whether we can find any ground in reason for this self-certification of knowledge.

In answering this question, Sir William Hamilton gives us the theory of Natural Realism. This is a true theory, though it is essentially a mere explication of the fact that man is so constituted that he knows outward objects through immediate perception, and himself in perceiving them. He is awaked to intellectual activity and self-consciousness by the impact of his physical environment on him through his sensorium. In one and the same act he perceives the outward object and himself as perceiving it. Therefore his knowledge of the outward object is as real as his knowledge of himself, the subject or inward object. If either is unreal the other must be unreal also, and the knowledge of both would disappear. Then all human knowledge would be impossible. The common-sense of mankind accepts this immediate knowledge in consciousness as real knowledge. Even those who have speculatively denied its reality as knowledge have conformed to it as real knowledge in every action. Objections against the reality of this immediate knowledge are no more pertinent against theology than against physical science — for the objection, if valid, sweeps away all human knowledge; man himself and the world around him are alike illusions or phantasms, and all men may say with literal exactness, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."

But we cannot stop in mere Natural Realism. Recognizing its truth so far as it goes, we push on our investigations to ascertain whether there is not some deeper ground in reason for the self-certifying reality of human knowledge. This we find in Rational Realism.[1] Man is constituted with the power of rational intuition, by which he knows universal and self-evident principles which are laws to all thought and energy. In immediate knowledge in consciousness he knows himself and the outward objects that act on him, not as mere phenomena or appearances, but as real beings

[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," pp. 75–82.

manifesting themselves in the phenomena. Thus he attains in an individual case the idea of being manifesting itself in phenomena. In the intuition of reason he sees the universal principle that all phenomena are the phenomena or appearances of some being. This is the category of substance and quality. In the exertion of his own energy, and meeting the resistance of it by outward objects, he knows in immediate consciousness that the energy or force which he exerts or resists is different from the motion which is caused by it. Thus in individual cases he gets the ideas of power or force as distinguished from motion, and of a cause as distinguished from its effect. In rational intuition he knows that it is a universal truth that all motion is the manifestation of force, and that every beginning and change must have a cause. In immediate consciousness he finds himself existing in space and time, and among men and material things, as one among many. In rational intuition he sees that the first principles of geometry, arithmetic, and of all mathematics, are universal and immutable principles. In immediate consciousness he finds himself among rational men in a system of interdependence, interaction, and reciprocity. In the intuition of reason he sees that he is under obligation and owes duties to men, that he has not the right to live solely for himself, appropriating the universe to himself as if he owned it, but must respect the rights and have regard to the well-being of others as well as of himself. In every object which he perceives through the senses he also perceives an ideal through rational intuition; he perceives the object at once in the forms of sense and in the forms of reason. Natural Realism appeals to Rational Realism, and is both justified and supplemented by it. In the light of reason we see the universal in the particular; the rational, the ideal, and the spiritual in the physical or material. In man's further investigation of observed facts, reasoning from the known to the unknown, his conclusions are real knowledge if his observation of facts has been correct and his reasoning at every step accordant with the principles and laws of reason.

But Rational Realism itself is not ultimate. The important truth which it presents leads us on to Theistic Realism. We ask why the rational intuitions themselves may not be mere subjective and illusive impressions of an individual mind. We may answer that the universe is found by scientific investigation to be consti-

tuted in accordance with them; that their validity is implied as essential in all knowledge; that reason is the highest power of intelligence, and therefore cannot rise above itself to criticise the truthfulness of its own principles and laws, and that any appeal from its judgments can be made only to reason itself. This is true.

But something more is implied in this answer itself. It presupposes that reason in man, in its essential and constituent principles, norms, and laws, is the same in kind with the reason that reveals itself pervading the universe and enlightening and regulating the almighty power energizing in it. And this is precisely the answer which theism gives.

Theistic Realism is the doctrine that the reality of human knowledge necessarily presupposes, as its only reasonable basis, the existence of God and the likeness of man to him in his rational constitution. Human knowledge presupposes that the universe is constituted intelligible, susceptible of being known by the human mind. When the universe or anything in it is studied, it is found to be constituted scientifically, so that the knowledge of it, when expressed and vindicated in words, is found to be science. If the science had not first been expressed in the universe the human mind could never have read it there, and recorded it in a scientific treatise. This implies that the absolute power that reveals itself energizing in the universe, sustaining and evolving it, is enlightened and directed by reason, the same in kind with human reason in its essential and constituent principles and characteristics as reason. It is, therefore, identical with what the theist calls God, and the existence of God and of man in his likeness is the necessary presupposition of the reality of human knowledge. Any power enlightened by reason is self-directive and self-exertive, — a personal being. Reason is everywhere and always the same in kind; otherwise knowledge is impossible. God is Reason in the form of the absolute and unconditioned. Man is reason, the same in kind, but in the form of the finite and the dependent.

Therefore man's self-certifying knowledge is real and valid knowledge, because the human reason that certifies its reality is, in its essence and constituent principles as reason, the same in kind with reason absolute and eternal in God. The universe is the expression of the archetypal thought of the absolute reason. That divine thought is the eternal archetype exactly accordant with all

rational truth, law, ideals, and ends, eternal in God, the absolute Reason. It is the original science of the universe eternal in the mind of God, and progressively expressed in the universe. It is the revelation of reason eternal, in the form of the absolute, to reason, essentially like it as reason, though in the form of the finite and dependent. Here, then, is a reasonable and philosophical basis of the reality of man's self-certifying knowledge. The universe, being the revelation of reason, must be intelligible to reason; being the expression of rational thought, human reason can read and interpret it; being the expression of science original in the mind of God, man observes and interprets the universe, and the record of his discoveries is science in the strictest accord with the principles and laws of human reason.

This is theistic realism. It is the reasonable and sufficient basis of the reality of human knowledge. And there is and can be no other. If the universe is not ultimately grounded in reason, if it is not the expression of rational thought, then it cannot be interpreted as the expression of rational thought; it cannot be translated into science, it is in its essence unintelligible. This Mr. Spencer acknowledges when he says that "the axiomatic truths of physical science unavoidably postulate absolute Being as their common basis."

Atheism, therefore, in any and all its forms, can be true only as it presupposes universal skepticism, the denial of the possibility of any human knowledge.

I proceed to exemplify and verify theistic realism in the various spheres of human knowledge.

The truth of theistic realism is exemplified and verified in physical science. Instead of excluding all knowledge of God, as some have loudly asserted, physical science demands the existence of God as the presupposition necessary to the possibility and reality of scientific knowledge.

All science depends on the truth of the intuitive principles and laws of reason. If any scientists do not recognize them, if on the contrary they positively deny their validity, yet they use them all the same in every process of scientific thought; and on the validity of these principles and laws the correctness of all their conclusions depends. But physical science can give no account of them and their significance, and no reason why they are trustworthy as laws to all thought and action. This theism alone can do.

Therefore, if there is no God who is the absolute Reason, and if reason in man is not essentially like reason in God, then all science breaks down. We assume that the principles of continuity, of uniformity, of non-contradiction are true in every star and in every atom. We spin our geometry, our arithmetic, algebra, and calculus out of our own minds; we apply the results to the observed positions of the heavenly bodies, and find that their positions and movements correspond. We thus get our astronomy. But if reason like our own does not rule in the planets, the sun, and the stars, then all our astronomy is worthless. Then the "Principia" of Newton, the "Mécanique Céleste" of Laplace, are only collections of subjective calculations expressed in meaningless symbols and issuing in total lack of knowledge. Mr. Norman Lockyer estimates that light — which comes from the sun, a distance of over 90,000,000 miles, in eight minutes — cannot be less than 3,500 years in coming from a star of the twelfth magnitude visible through a telescope not of the very highest power.[1] This assumes that, throughout a sphere whose radius is this immense distance, the universe is regulated by reason the same in its principles and laws as the reason of man; that the same mathematics which regulate our thinking regulate the movements of all bodies within that sphere; that the same ether and the same laws of chemical dynamics prevail throughout it, and that these all have remained unchanged during all the centuries in which that light has been speeding toward the earth. This is only a single instance exemplifying the fact that all science rests on the presupposition that the power energizing throughout the universe is enlightened and directed by reason which, in its essential principles and laws, is the same in kind with our own. The same is exemplified in the immeasurably greater distance of stars which cannot be seen through the most powerful telescope, and reveal themselves only by the action of the actinic rays on a photographic plate, implying a vastly greater sphere and many more centuries of the journey of light through it. The same assumption of science is exemplified in all scientific discovery through what is now called induction. The scientist constructs in imagination, from what is already known, an hypothesis, according to the principles and laws of reason, as to what the unknown fact or law may be; he then deduces, in accordance

[1] Nineteenth Century, Nov. 1889.

with the principles and laws of reason, what the fact or law would be if his hypothesis is correct; he then makes further observations and ascertains whether the facts known correspond with the necessary deductions from his hypothesis. Thus in all scientific induction science assumes that the necessary principles and laws of human reason are true throughout all space and time, and verifies the assumption by ascertaining through the observation of facts that the universe is constituted and evolved in accordance with this assumption and the conclusions founded on it. This is further exemplified in the fact that science assumes that the universe in every part is constructed scientifically, in accordance with reason like our own. As Professor Huxley says, the object of science "is the discovery of the rational order which pervades the universe."[1] Whenever a new fact is observed science assumes that it is capable of scientific explanation, that it is in conformity with law and in harmony with the rational order of the system. It never for a moment assumes that it has found anything incapable of scientific explanation. For however long a time an observed fact remains unexplained, science assumes that it is because the facts which will explain it have not yet been discovered, never that it is in itself inexplicable and unscientific. Thus the possibility of a scientific knowledge of the universe necessarily presupposes the existence of God and the likeness of man, as rational, to him. As we see in the light of the sun, so we know in the light of the divine and eternal Reason, "the true light which lighteth every man." Thus science itself must look reverently to God, the absolute and eternal Reason, and say with the Psalmist, "In thy light shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9).

When a skeptical scientist awakens to the consciousness of the dependence of his own science on the recognition of the universe as grounded in absolute Reason, constituted and evolved in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of absolute Reason and for the progressive realization of the archetypal ideal of that Reason, he may well exclaim, with Jacob when he awoke, "God was in this place and I knew it not" (Gen. xxviii. 16), and will see science itself as a ladder between heaven and earth, on which God's revelations come down to man and the thought of man mounts up to God. This the scientists of former centuries were wont devoutly to recognize. Listen to Kepler: "I give thee

[1] Lecture on the Progress of Science in the last Half Century.

thanks, Lord and Creator, that thou hast given me delight in thy creation and I have exulted in the work of thy hands. I have revealed to mankind the glory of thy works, so far as my limited mind could take in that infinite glory. . . . If I have given forth anything that is unworthy of thee, or if I have sought my own fame, wilt thou, gracious and merciful, forgive me." Hear Linnaeus, in his researches among plants: "God eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, I have seen from behind as he has passed by, and have been awed." Hear Lord Bacon, joining this choir of kingly worshipers: "Thou, therefore, Father, who gavest the visible light as the first-fruits of the creation, and at the completion of thy works didst inspire the countenance of man with intellectual light, guard and direct this work, which, proceeding from thy bounty, seeks in return thy glory. . . . If we labor in thy works, thou wilt make us partakers of thy vision and of thy Sabbath. We pray that this mind may abide in us; and that, by our hands and the hands of others to whom thou shalt impart the same mind, thou wilt be pleased to endow with new gifts the family of man."

Many scientists of our own time are theists; they see no conflict between physical science and theism, but rather regard science as enlarging our knowledge of God. It is unnecessary to mention names, for many of them are eminent and widely known both as scientists and as theists.

Professor Agassiz prefixed to his great work on "American Natural History" an elaborate Introduction in more than thirty chapters on "The Method of Classification." The fundamental principle which he maintains through the whole is, that all attempts at artificial classification in "Natural History" are futile; that all classification must be natural, and must consist in seeking by the study of individuals to find out the thought of the Creator, the plan which he is realizing in them. All genera and species, all gradations of the orders of animals are simply expressions of the divine thought realized in them.

Science of late, even when not explicitly recognizing God, has reached positions rendering the recognition of him logically and reasonably necessary. The Positivism of Comte recognized no absolute Being. In consistency with this it denied all knowledge of cause, of force molar or molecular, of atoms, of the ether, or of any substantial being. These he contemptuously rejected as

mere metaphysical ideas having no place in science. He limited knowledge to the subjective phenomena of sense. He expected and predicted that his Positivism would prevail and that in it the highest progress of man in knowledge would be realized. But science in its progress has already rejected it as inadequate to meet its demands. In fact what Comte rejected as metaphysical ideas are now treated as realities and have of late been among the most prominent topics of scientific thought. Thus science itself with its conservation and correlation of force, its distinction of force potential and energizing, its ether-theory of light, heat, and electricity, its atoms and molecules, its theory of evolution, has been teaching us that the reality of the physical lies in the rational, the ideal, the spiritual, and depends on the principles and laws of reason which are constituent elements of human reason and are assumed in all science as true and immutable through all space and time. Because science finds the universe constituted and evolved in accordance with these eternal and universal principles and laws, the universe itself as known in science becomes a demonstration, not only of the real existence of the absolute Reason in whom these principles and laws are eternal and immutable, but also of the entire trustworthiness of the rational intuitions of the human mind, through which man knows these principles and laws. The scientist reasons on the assumption that these principles and laws of reason are universally and immutably true and regulative of rational thought and action. Then science finds that the constitution and evolution of the universe and the action of all physical forces in it are regulated in unerring accordance with these principles and laws. There is no longer any place for skepticism which resolves all knowledge into mere conjecture and denies the reality of knowledge.

A further noticeable approximation of the thinking of skeptics to the position of the theist is found in the fact that, with the exception of the few who accept Comte's Positivism in its full significance, atheism itself in all its current forms acknowledges the existence of some absolute being. This is acknowledged by Spencerian agnostics, by pantheists, and by materialists. Thus they admit the knowledge of real being as distinguished from mere subjective illusion, and the reality of Power as distinguished from motion, and the reality of causal energy. But if the power

manifested in the universe reveals the absolute being as power, certainly the reason manifested in the universe, regulating the power, equally reveals the absolute being as reason. If the absolute being is recognized as blind, irrational force, this would give no basis for the truth of the universal principles of human reason, or for human knowledge of any kind, and pre-eminently no basis for the reality of human science, which is the knowledge of the universe as scientifically constituted in accordance with principles and laws like those essential and constituent in the reason of man. Therefore atheism in all its forms presupposes the impossibility of any scientific knowledge of the universe and of the reality of any human knowledge.

Materialistic scientists have maintained that the phenomena of conscious mind are fully accounted for, under the law of the conservation and correlation of force, as molecular motion of the brain transformed into thought, choice, love, and other manifestations of conscious mind. Mr. Edward Clodd, in "The Story of Creation: a Plain Account of Evolution," says: "The nebulous stuff of which the universe is the product held within its diffused vapors", all that we have knowledge of, including "genius." A reviewer of the book wittily says, "The story of creation is shown to be the unbroken record of the evolution of gas into genius." [1] But in the progress of scientific investigation scientists are more and more finding insuperable difficulties in each of these theories. Professor Haeckel is compelled to postulate in the brain a peculiar kind of mind-cells. Professor Clifford assumed the existence of a "mind-stuff," a small portion of which he supposed to be present in everything. These materialistic assumptions fully recognize mind as entirely distinct from other forms of matter; they recognize the old ineffaceable distinction, but totally fail to explain it. They merely try to hide the insuperable difficulty of materialism by pushing it back into still deeper obscurity. Much more truly scientific is Professor Tyndall: "While accepting fearlessly the facts of materialism. . . . I bow my head in the dust before the mystery of mind, which has hitherto defied its own penetrative power, and which may utterly resolve itself into a demonstrable impossibility of penetration. . . . The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is inconceivable as a result of mechanics. . . . The problem of the

[1] Contemporary Review, Aug. 1888, p. 194.

connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in pre-scientific ages." John Fiske says of the theory that mental phenomena are the molecular motions of the brain transformed into thought: "That it cannot possibly be the product of any cunning arrangement of material particles is demonstrated beyond peradventure by what we now know of the correlation of physical forces. The Platonic view of the soul, as a spiritual substance, an effluence from Godhood, which under certain conditions becomes incarnated in perishable forms of matter, is doubtless the view most consonant with the present state of our knowledge." [1] Professor Tyndall says that the supposition that mental phenomena — and he mentions as an example his emotions in seeing the avalanches on the Alps — existed in the original nebulous matter would necessarily change our entire conception of what matter essentially is.

The acceptance of one or the other of these two theories is absolutely essential to materialism; either the molecular action of the brain must be transformed into conscious mental action, or the mind must have existed as a distinct entity in the original homogeneous stuff. Each theory recognizes the complete distinction between matter and mind; the latter, that mind has distinct existence in the homogeneous, carries the distinction back antecedent to the beginning of the evolution and incorporates it into the very substance and constitution of the universe. Each involves a change in the essential idea either of matter or of mind. And each totally fails to remove the difficulty. Thus materialism totally fails to account for the fundamental facts of human knowledge and to give any reasonable basis for the reality of human knowledge. This of itself is a complete disproof of materialism. On the contrary, theism presents a perfectly clear exposition of both realities and a reasonable basis for our knowledge of them in accordance with the common consciousness of mankind. In this, therefore, Theistic Realism is exemplified and verified.

That the reality of human knowledge presupposes the existence of God, and man's likeness to him, is also exemplified and verified in ethics. The principles of moral law present themselves as of imperative obligation, absolute authority, and universal application. We must think the law of love obligatory on persons of every country and of every age. If we think of any

[1] The Destiny of Man, pp. 42, 43.

world inhabited by rational persons anywhere in space, or in any period of time however remote, we must think its inhabitants are under obligation to obey that law. It is no "provincialism of this planet."[1] It is as universal as the law of causation or the principles of mathematics. Lockyer estimated that between 30,000,000 and 50,000,000 of stars are visible to man. If every one of these has planets inhabited by rational persons, in every one of them the law of love must be supreme. If it is not so, then that law is no longer the one supreme, universal, and imperative law having its basis in eternal and absolute Reason. Thus the knowledge of right and wrong, of duty, of the law of love presupposes the existence of God, in whom, as the absolute Reason, this law is eternal; who energizes in accordance with this law in constituting and developing the universe, and from whom it becomes the law to all rational beings. And it is only because his rational creatures are, as rational, essentially like God, that they, in their own rational and moral development, come to have knowledge of this law, and, conforming with it in the exercise of love, are capable of becoming like God in moral character. If there were no God there could be no moral law.

Atheism in all its forms involves the impossibility of moral law and government, and of the unity of all rational persons in one moral system.

I have already alluded to the teaching of Mr. Kidd in his "Social Evolution," that it is not reasonable that a man should have any interest in any generation of men living after he himself will be dead, because his own welfare does not depend on the conduct of men in that future time. For the same reason it would follow that he is not interested in the people of his own generation except so far as his own welfare is affected by their action. This resolves itself into the Hedonistic theory of ethics in its lowest form, — that the supreme end of all right action is the agent's own happiness. This being the teaching of human reason, the law of love is imposed on men by an ultra-rational or supra-rational power above and beyond reason. Then the question arises how man can have any knowledge of such ultra-rational power having nothing in common with human reason. It would seem to shut man out from all knowledge of God, and

[1] James Martineau, "Study of Religion," vol. i. pp. 27, 28.

to shut God out from the possibility of revealing himself to man. Or, if man can know him, he would know him only as an arbitrary resistless power, forcing his own arbitrary and supra-rational behests on man, and punishing him for not obeying. This carries us back to the philosophy of Duns Scotus and Occam, who taught that God's law is the enactment of his naked and resistless will; and that, if God had commanded just the contrary, man would have been under equal obligation to obey him. In such a theory of a supra-rational God is no basis for any eternal and immutable distinction of right and wrong, nor for the reality of human knowledge in any sphere. It would certainly be in direct contradiction to all physical science, for this is continually demonstrating that the physical universe is constituted and ordered in accordance with the principles and laws which are constituent elements of human reason.

Theistic Realism is exemplified and verified also in æsthetics. The language of skepticism is, "If language be intended not to veil but to convey thought, the phrase 'poetic interpretation of nature' implies that nature means something and has something to say. I must venture to affirm, in contravention of this implication, that nature is a dumb oracle, who of herself says nothing, but will most obligingly emit any voice the poet chooses to put inside of her."[1] This is simply the language of universal skepticism. It would imply that nature would be equally obliging to the scientist and emit any voice that the scientist might suggest to her. The existence of God as the absolute Reason and the likeness of the divine to the human, as rational, are necessarily presupposed in all æsthetics which recognizes the beautiful as anything more than the pleasing or agreeable, and which recognizes ideals of perfection as creations of the mind in accordance with norms or standards of reason, and so aims beyond mere copies of what is observed in nature. If such rational norms or standards of the perfect and the beautiful exist in the reason of man, their prototypes must be eternal in God, the absolute Reason, and that absolute Reason must be in its essence as reason like the reason of man. Moreover, human reason sees that the universe must exist for a rational end, realizing progressively an ideal which commends itself to human reason as reasonable, right,

[1] Contemporary Review, November, 1877. Review of "Shairp's Poetic Interpretation of Nature."

and worthy. Whatever difficulties present themselves in our empirical observation which we cannot immediately harmonize with such an ideal, the human mind still insists that a perfect moral ideal must be in process of being realized in the progressive evolution of the universe. Human reason revolts from the conception of this vast and glorious universe as a complexity of blind forces grinding forever to accomplish no reasonable end. And all objections to theism on account of evil in the universe rest on the assumption that the universe ought to exist for a reasonable end worthy of its grandeur. But if an ideal of some end worthy of this vast and complicated expenditure of power exists and is in process of realization, it must be eternal and archetypal in the mind of God. And human reason sees such an ideal in the kingdom of God and the universal reign of good-will directed by righteousness; it foresees and expects its progressive realization in a future always better than the past, and opening in endless vistas of glory into the life eternal. And this it is able to see and to expect, because human reason is in essential likeness to the divine, and participates in its eternal light.

Atheism excludes every reasonable conception of the beautiful and identifies it with the pleasurable or agreeable; it excludes every rational ideal of the perfect and all reasonable expectation or hope of progress toward its realization, and smothers all hope of immortality.

The truth of theistic realism is exemplified and verified still further in the knowledge of the Good, or of true well-being. Love both in God and man is good-will regulated by righteousness. Theism teaches that God has constituted and evolves the universe in accordance with the principles and laws of reason, in the exercise of the love required by the law, and for the realization of rational ideals and ends. If the universe is thus constituted, it is impossible for any person to attain real well-being except in accordance with the principles and laws of reason and with the law of love. Man, therefore, must sit in judgment on the sources of his enjoyment and decide which have true worth or are worthy of the pursuit of a rational being. He can do this only because he sees in his own constitution, as rational, principles and laws the same in kind with those which have enlightened and guided the divine mind in the constitution and evolution of the universe. If there is no God, then there are no eternal prin-

ciples, laws, and ideals of perfection in accordance with which the universe was constituted, and by which the good or well-being possible in the universe is determined. Then nothing is left us, in defining the good or well-being, but the lowest type of egoistic hedonism. The good can be ascertained only by measuring empirically the quantity of enjoyment, as to duration and intensity, obtained in the pursuit, possession, and use of any object. Any one who is finding his enjoyment in sensuality, or in any line of selfish gratification, has no standard of truth and law by which he can judge and condemn these as unworthy, but is shut up to seeking his enjoyment in them, because he dislikes nobler pursuits and can see no pleasure in them. The latter do not attract but are only repulsive to him. Accordingly we find that the great ideas which vitalize modern political and social progress presuppose the existence of God and derive therefrom their beneficent power. Such are the ideas of the brotherhood and equality of man, his dignity and worth as man, the sacredness of his rights. Under the influence of such ideas the people have been putting away despotism and slavery, establishing popular government, opposing the reign of covetousness, opposing plutocracy, and asserting for laborers their rights. These ideas are significant only from the facts that there is a God, that men are in his likeness as rational and capable of being like him in love, that they are objects of his providential care, his moral law and government, and his redeeming love. Accordingly it is a fact that this progress has been confined to the Christian nations and has affected the non-Christian peoples only as carried to them from Christian countries. Atheism, therefore, necessarily implies that there is no ultimate unchanging standard of good and evil, but that every one must seek what seems good to him, whatever he desires and enjoys, following his own lusts.

Therefore Theistic Realism is exemplified and verified as the ultimate ground of all belief in human progress. Skeptics object that, by the methods of empirical science which alone they recognize as science, we do not find that the universe exists and goes on in the harmony and unity of a system progressively realizing a rational ideal. An obvious answer is that in this very objection the skeptic himself appeals to an ideal existing in his own mind accordant with immutable principles and laws of reason, by comparison with which he judges the universe to be imperfect. Thus

he acknowledges the reality of rational principles, laws, and ideals in the human reason, which gives a standard of appeal and judgment in accordance with which he affirms that the universe ought to be constituted and evolved and so be progressively realizing the ideal. Thus by his own objection he refutes his own skepticism. If such supreme, universal, and immutable principles exist, they must be eternal in God, the absolute Reason.

A further answer is that, as soon as we acknowledge God the absolute Reason, we see the unity and continuity of the universe as progressively realizing a grand archetypal ideal of reason. And science discovers that the universe is thus progressive in the unity and continuity of a reasonable system toward the realization of an archetypal reasonable ideal. It begins in the homogeneous nebulous stuff; it is evolved through successive epochs, realizing higher and higher orders of beings, until it becomes fitted to be the sphere in which finite rational beings can live and act. Then these beings come into existence. They are rational persons in the likeness of God, who is a Spirit; they know him and read his thoughts after him as he has expressed them in the universe. Then we discover an end worthy of the existence of the universe, in the progressive development of the kingdom of God, which consists of finite rational persons in the process of education to know God and to serve him, in unity with God and with one another in the life of love, and forever advancing under God's guidance and influence in spiritual development, knowledge, and power. When we think of this education and development of rational and immortal beings going on in innumerable worlds and constituting the kingdom of God increasing in glory through endless time, we certainly perceive the universe in the unity and continuity of a rational system progressively realizing a grand ideal worthy of God. On the contrary, physical science, when not recognizing God, is driven to the conclusion that in the evolution of the universe there is a continuous waste of energy which sooner or later must issue in the cessation of all life and motion, and our universe will become and remain a silent, motionless, dark, and frozen mass.

Thus human knowledge in every aspect and every sphere presupposes the existence of God the absolute Reason, the likeness to him of man as rational, and his possible likeness to him in love. This is true of the common knowledge of every-day life. It is equally

true of physical science, of ethics, of æsthetics, and of practical or teleological knowledge as to the ways of promoting the well-being of the individual and of society.[1] We may, therefore, join with an ancient writer in saying: Wisdom "is a breath of the power of God and a pure effulgence from the glory of the Almighty; therefore no defiled thing falls into her. For she is a reflection of the everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the efficiency of God and image of his goodness. Though but one, she can do all things; and though remaining in herself, she maketh all things new; and, from generation to generation entering holy souls, she equippeth friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him who dwelleth with wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun and above every position of the stars; being compared with light she is found superior. For after light cometh night; but vice shall not prevail against wisdom."[2]

In Patmos, John saw in vision the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. xxi. 23). And if we see things as they are, it is equally true of this world that it is the glory of God which lightens it. All human knowledge presupposes the Divine reason pervading and illuminating the universe. All man's seeing is by participation in the Divine light. It had become a proverb in ancient Israel: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts" (Prov. xx. 27). Human nature and life are full of enigmas and hard problems. It lies in darkness. The spirit of man is its light, searching all its deepest recesses. But the spirit of man is itself the candle of the Lord. Its light is from him. All man's knowledge comes from his being, as rational, in the likeness of God and participating in his light. God is "the father of lights" (James i. 17). If this were not so, all man's knowledge would be extinguished and total darkness would settle upon him and his life.

[1] A distinguished English scientist, in one of his published writings, sneers at theologians as publishing their theology "in great volumes of colossal ignorance." But ignorance can nowhere be more "colossal" than in the man who has no knowledge of God, nor of himself as anything but a flitting phantom, nor of the universe except as an ever-revolving and ever-dissolving panorama of shadows which themselves are shadows of nothing.

[2] The Apocrypha: "The Wisdom of Solomon," chap. vii. 25–30.

So Jesus said: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Similar was the thought of Sir Henry More: —

> "I come from heaven, am an immortal ray
> Of God; O joy! and back to God shall go;
> And here sweet love on wings me up doth stay.
> I live, I'm sure, and joy this life to know.
> Night and vain dreams begone. Father of light,
> We live, as thou, clad with eternal day.
> Faith, wisdom, joy, free love and winged might —
> This is true life; all else death and decay."

Voltaire said: "God made man in his own image, and man has returned the compliment." But this objection that theism is essentially anthropomorphic is now effectually silenced. For all human knowledge, and pre-eminently all scientific knowledge, is indisputably anthropomorphic in the same sense in which theism is so. It assumes that the whole universe is constituted and ordered in accordance with the same principles and laws which are essential and constituent in human reason. If it is not so, then all human knowledge, scientific or non-scientific, dissolves into illusion.

The necessary conclusion is, that the fundamental reality in the universe is the spiritual and supernatural, not the material and physical. The absolute Being is God, the absolute Spirit, in whom all the powers in the universe originate and by whom, as absolute Reason, they are directed. In him as Reason all the fundamental and universal principles of reason and the rational archetype of the universe are eternal; in him as almighty all the causal energies of the universe originate, in him are all the powers and resources making the universe possible. Thus the absolute and fundamental reality of the universe is the supernatural, God the eternal Spirit. And among earthly and finite beings the fundamental reality is the supernatural, the mind and spirit of man, who is in the likeness of God. Instead of the common impression that the fundamental and substantial reality is matter and its forces, the things we see and feel and handle, and that spirit is ghostly, phantasmic and unreal, we must accept as true the very contrary, — that the spiritual and supernatural is the fundamental reality, that the material is a medium in and through which spirit reveals itself.

CHAPTER V

GOD IS A SPIRIT: — WILL

The will is the attribute of a personal being considered as having causal efficiency or power and capable of determining in the light of reason both the direction and exertion of his energy. All power is not will, but all will is power. It is power self-directive and self-exertive in the light of reason, as distinguished from power acting in necessity as it is acted on. In our thinking we necessarily abstract will from reason. In reality they are different but inseparable aspects of one and the same personal being. Will is practical or energizing reason; reason is rational power or will. In the preceding chapter we have considered God as Reason; in this chapter we are to consider him as will. In discussing the two we simply contemplate God, the one personal Spirit, in the two aspects of his being, the rational and the efficient or energizing. His reason, whether in its intellectual aspect as the organ of truth or in its ethical aspect as the organ of law, is never separated from his power or will.

The attributes of God as Will are Almightiness, Freedom and Love.

I. Almightiness or Omnipotence. — God's power is unconditioned and unlimited by any reality independent of himself.

1. Power or causal efficiency is an attribute of God. It is the basis of the idea of will. Freedom can have no reality except as the attribute of a being endowed with causal efficiency and capable of causal energy. Therefore, in considering the attributes of God as will we must begin with his power, which is the basal reality of will. God is the first cause of the universe, and is ever energizing in it. Power, or causative efficiency, is an attribute recognized in every conception of a divinity, even in fetichism and the

worship of the so-called nature-gods. It is essential in the idea of the absolute Being. All who believe that absolute Being exists, even though denying its personality, recognize it as the Power which manifests itself in all the phenomena of the universe.

God's power is creative. This is involved in the fact that as the absolute Being he is unconditioned and all-conditioning. As such he is the origin and first cause of all that is. He alone is self-existent. Finite creatures derive their being and power from him and exist only as dependent on him. As the source and support of all beings and their powers, he is their creator.

God's creative power is primarily the efficiency of his will. It has no analogy to the exertion of muscular strength. It is rather analogous to man's moving his arm by a volition. The opening lines of the eighth book of the Iliad are often quoted as exemplifying the sublime. Jupiter forbids the gods under the direst penalties to aid either the Greeks or the Trojans. To remind them of his resistless might he challenges them to hang a golden chain from heaven, and all of them, both gods and goddesses, to lay hold of it; and he warns them that, striving to their utmost, they would be unable to drag him down. But he would grasp the chain and swing them all, with the earth and sea besides; and then would fasten the chain around the summit of Olympus and leave them all dangling in mid-air. Here is nothing but muscular strength, a sort of athletic contest. How immeasurably more sublime the scriptural representations: "Let light be, and light was." "He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."[1] Longinus, in his treatise on "The Sublime," cites this verse in Genesis as a most remarkable example of the sublime.

2. God is almighty, or omnipotent. In all his attributes as personal Spirit, God remains always the absolute Being. This must always be borne in mind in defining the personal attributes. Accordingly God is absolute in power. As self-existent, unconditioned by any being or causal efficiency independent of himself, his power is underived and independent. As eternal and everywhere present, his power is not limited within any period of time or any locality in space. In the plenitude of his being his power

[1] Gen. i. 3; Psalm xxxiii. 9, 6.

is not limited in quantity. Thus he is almighty; his power is not limited or conditioned by any being or power independent of himself.

It is objected that we do not know that God is absolutely almighty, but only that he has power adequate to cause what actually exists. This objection rests on the supposition that God is known to be the absolute Being only by inference from observed effects. If so, we could infer only a cause adequate to the effects. But the objection is of no force against the true position that the existence of the absolute Being is known through a fundamental principle of reason which is a necessary law of thought. God is not the first term in the chain of finite causes and effects; he is the absolute Being who transcends the whole chain and is the ultimate and necessary ground of all finite being and power.

It is also objected that it would be a limitation of God if he should cause finite effects in space and time. But the objection, if valid, would itself imply that God is limited. If he is shut out by the boundaries of time, space and quantity, he is limited as really as if, like finite beings, he were shut up within them. Further, his creation of a second absolute Being is absurd and impossible, and the objection denies that he can cause any finite effect. Therefore, if the objection is valid, his whole activity is shut within himself, he cannot reveal himself in the universe nor in any effect on finite creatures; the universe is not dependent on him, he never acts upon or in it, and to all finite minds he is a mere zero. His power to cause effects within the limits of time, space and quantity is essential to his absoluteness. According to the most strictly philosophical meaning of the absolute, he is not excluded from space and time, but is able to cause effects within their limits and thus to reveal himself to finite persons in a finite universe. That the absolute Being exists is a necessary principle of reason. What he is further than this is revealed to us only through the universe in time and space. The attempt to picture the absolute Being, as he might exist in transcendence of the universe and not revealed in it, is in vain and is prolific of error.

3. While God is not limited in the exercise of his power by any reality independent of himself, it is equally true that in its exercise his action is regulated by the rational principles and laws, the rational ideals of perfection and well-being, the rational

distinction of the absolute and the finite, eternal in himself, the absolute Reason. In other words, his power is inseparable from his reason; it is God, the absolute Reason, who himself is energizing.

This regulation, as shown in a preceding chapter, is twofold, constitutive and ethical. It is constitutive in the sense that the principles of reason, the contradictories of which are absurd, determine what it is possible for power to effect. Even almighty power cannot give reality to the absurd. So Lucretius reasons against the mythological creations of his time: It is impossible that there is a centaur, because a man is young when a horse dies of old age; or Scylla with the body of a fish girdled with dogs, because dogs cannot live under water nor fish out of it; or a chimæra, consisting of a lion, dragon and goat, breathing fire, because fire consumes flesh. The regulation is ethical in the sense that God's will by his eternal free choice is in harmony with his reason in perfect love. The first is his rational constitution, making it impossible for him to give reality to the absurd; the second is his moral character, making it certain that he will do nothing wrong. These are the two bases on which the stability, uniformity and continuity of the universe rest, and which insure its progressive development in accordance with the truths and laws and toward the realization of the ideals and ends of perfect reason.

The former of these was considered in the discussion of omniscience. It remains only to exemplify it in some of its applications.

No power can annul the distinction between the absolute and the conditioned, the infinite and the finite. We have seen that whatever God creates must be finite, and must be constituted according to truths, laws, ideals, and worthy ends of reason. But the finite can never be equal to the infinite nor a completed manifestation or revelation of it. Necessarily, then, God's revelation of himself in the universe must be progressive and at every point of time unfinished and incomplete. At every point of time it must be prophetic of a greater revelation in the future.

We have seen that God in creating the universe has given it a reality in itself and has made it stable by constituting it according to the principles, laws, ideals, and ends of reason.

Therefore, after he has thus created and constituted it, the

effect of his action in it must be commensurate with the constitution and capacity of the being *on* which he acts. Having created a stone, he cannot instruct it in knowledge, nor convince it by argument, nor move it by an appeal to compassion. After creating man a free agent, he must act on him, if at all, as a free agent, by influences adapted to a rational free will. He cannot change his will by almightiness any more than he can move a stone by eloquence, or impart to a person virtue in pound-weight packages. So, in revealing himself to man, the revelation must be commensurate with the capacity of the man. God cannot reveal himself to an oyster at all. He cannot reveal himself to a child or a savage beyond his power to understand. At the wedding in Cana there were six waterpots filled to the brim with water, and it was all converted into wine. If they had been only half as large the divine miracle would have been the same, but there would have been only half as much wine. As men grow in capacity, knowledge, and culture they grow in capacity to receive and communicate the gracious revelations of God. So our Lord said to his disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter."[1]

The effect of God's action must be commensurate also with the constitution and capacity of the agent *through* which he acts. Effects caused through physical agencies must be commensurate with the constitution and powers of the agents, and accordant with the unchangeable laws of their action. The momentum of a moving body must be according to its mass and velocity. A plant can produce fruit only according to its constitution and the laws of its organic life. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" God by miraculous power may produce effects in nature which nature left to itself would not have produced. But, so far as he acts through physical agents, the effects must be commensurate with the powers and constitution of the agent and the unchanging laws of its action. Nature makes no leaps. It is inseparable from the idea of a physical system that it is constituted according to rational principles and goes on its course by the action of physical causes energizing according to the laws of the system.

The same principle is true of personal beings in the moral

[1] John xvi. 12, and xiii. 7.

system. Man is placed in the world to supply his wants by his own skill and industry. The supply will be commensurate with his physical and intellectual power, and his skill and industry in attaining knowledge of the resources and powers of nature and in mastering and using them for his own ends. And it is in doing this that he attains his own highest development and his due dominion over nature. Tertullian argues that what God himself has not made is not pleasing to God. He infers that it is not right for women to wear purple or scarlet raiment, because God has not created sheep with purple or scarlet wool.[1] But this supposes that God is to do everything for and instead of man, and that man has nothing to do with the reason and free will with which God has endowed him. What God accomplishes through the agency of man must be commensurate with the powers of the man and the skill and faithfulness with which he uses his powers. What man misses through this arrangement is no disproof of God's almightiness. The arrangement is inseparable from the essential constitution of a moral system; and according to the constitution of things it is only in this way that the man can realize his highest perfection and good. So, in the kingdom of Christ, Christians are "stewards of the manifold grace of God." Under the quickening and guidance of God's Spirit the kingdom is to be established and extended through the world by the agency of Christians with the influences of truth and love. This agency is essential to the existence of a moral system and the growth and development of the spiritual life in it. The result must be commensurate with the receptivity of the Spirit's influence by faith, and the power, wisdom, and faithfulness of the disciples of Christ.

Thus the action of God in the exercise of his almighty power is regulated by the principles which are constitutive of reason, which no power can annul, and the contradictories of which are absurdities which no power can make actual in being.

It is also regulated ethically, in the sense that his will is, by his own free choice, in eternal harmony with reason. God is love. His character makes it certain that he will always act in harmony with the principles and laws of reason and for the realization of all which absolute Reason sees as perfect and good. God's almightiness is in its essence a rational and moral and

[1] On the Apparel of Women, bk. i. chap. 8; bk. ii. chap. 10.

therein a self-limiting power. It is Reason itself energizing according to its own eternal laws for the realization of its own ideals of perfection and of the good, which it estimates by its own unchanging norms as of true worth. Swedenborg expresses this truth in his peculiar language as "the marriage of the Good and the True."[1] It is the complete union of love with the knowledge of the truth which constitutes wisdom; and these in this union regulate all the action of the Almighty.

The certainty that God will never do wrong is as complete as the certainty that he will never give reality to the absurd. Hence it is said, "It is impossible for God to lie."[2] But the certainty and impossibility in the former case are founded on God's love, in which his will, in its own free choice, is in eternal harmony with reason; in the latter case they are a necessity founded in the very constitution of the eternal and universal Reason.

4. This regulation of almighty power by reason, in this two-fold way, implies no limitation of God.

Instead of being a limitation or defect, it reveals the perfection of God as the absolute Reason. The action of almightiness is shown in it to be his energizing in accordance with Reason in the expression and realization of its constitutive principles, laws, ideals, and ends. God in all the action of his almightiness reveals continually the union of perfect knowledge of all truth with perfect love, constituting perfect wisdom. An almightiness acting otherwise would reveal folly in undertaking to realize the impossible and wickedness in doing what is wrong; thus it would prove itself foolish and wicked, and therein not almighty, not God, the absolute and all-perfect Being. God is not the less but the greater for being consciously rational and free. A God, conscious, free, and personal, is a greater and nobler being than any impersonal substance or impersonal law conceived as the ultimate ground of the universe; and is the only conceivable object of adoration, worship, and love. According to any pantheistic conception of God as first coming to consciousness in man, man would be a being of a higher order than God.

This regulation of almighty power by Reason is not a limitation of almightiness, because the establishing of principles of

[1] The True Christian Religion, p. 417, chap. x. sec. xii. n. 624.
[2] Heb. vi. 18.

reason and the annulling of them in effecting an absurdity are not proper acts of power. An engine, of whatever power, would be unable to draw an inference. Physical power has nothing to do with demonstrating a proposition in Euclid. The will cannot construct a circle with unequal radii. This implies no limitation of power within its proper sphere. It simply implies the eternal supremacy of reason and the impossibility of dethroning it. Power cannot act in the sphere of reason. Almightiness itself cannot even enter its eternal temple. It can only wait at the door to receive its commands. It has power to disobey them; but it cannot annul or change their truth and obligation.

And, lastly, though God's action is always regulated by reason, the universe is never beyond his control. He can interrupt any physical sequence, frustrate any plan of finite free agents, annihilate any creature, if reason demands it in the interest of truth and right and love and according to the behests of perfect wisdom.

When it is said that God's government is under law, an objection is urged that God cannot be under anything; if he is under law and obeys law he cannot be the absolute, the unconditioned and all-conditioning. This objection would be valid if the law were independent of God, and imposed on him from without. It would be valid, for example, on the theory that the law is a constitution of the universe or a nature of things, existing eternally independent of God. Then God would be conditioned and bound under a law external to and independent of himself. Then he would no longer be God. Impersonal law would be supreme and no personal God would exist. The objection has no force when it is understood that all truth and law, all norms and archetypes of perfection and good, are eternal in God, the absolute Reason. In obeying law he is not conditioned by any being, power, or law independent of himself. It is simply that God in the exercise of will is by his own free choice in harmony with his own reason; God in the free exercise of his power is in harmony with himself as absolute and eternal Reason. Even man finds the law in himself and obeys his own reason and conscience. This is not a limitation of man. It is of the essence of his greatness as being in the likeness of God. The limitation is that he is finite and not the original and eternal reason. God finds the law in himself and obeys it, knowing that in himself, the absolute Reason, it is the eternal, absolute, and universal law.

Here another objection is urged, that if God is thus the absolute Reason, he is conditioned and limited by his own constitution. He finds himself constituted as the absolute Spirit. His constitution is something "given," something imposed on him with which he had nothing to do. This objection is urged by Dorner, Rothe, and others. The same objection applied to man would be that because man is constituted a rational person, with the power of self-determination in the light of reason, he is not a free agent. This is simply the absurdity that because man is constituted with all the constituent elements of free agency, therefore he is not a free agent. The absurdity is more glaring when the objection is applied to God, of whom, as rational Spirit, we not only predicate reason and the constituent elements of freedom, but also affirm that in exercising his freedom he is absolutely unconditioned and unlimited by any power or environment independent of himself. This objection leads directly to the absurdity that, if God is a free agent, he must have created himself. Much more, then, man cannot be a free agent because he has not created himself, but owes his being and all its constitutional endowments to God. The necessary inference would be that there is no rational free agency either in God or man, — therefore, no moral system of rational free agents under the moral government of God. The objection rests on a total misconception of what freedom of will or free agency is. As shown in a preceding chapter, the truth which these objectors are blindly groping after is simply that God by his own free choice eternally and always determines himself to act in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason in the progressive realization of the eternal archetype of all perfection and well-being possible to be realized by almighty power in a finite universe, in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason. Therein he freely determines his own moral character and its manifestations in the action of love.

5. The eternal existence of intractable matter is not necessary to explain this regulation and restriction of the divine almightiness. In fact it would not explain, but would annul it. Eternal matter existing independent of God would be a real limitation of his power and incompatible with his absoluteness.

Nor is the objection of John Stuart Mill valid, that God himself created the matter which he finds so intractable, and that, having

all power, he has only to will it and every difficulty will disappear. This is founded on the supposition that the God of theism is an almighty caprice, free from all law. For such an almighty caprice there could be no difficulties. Every end might be realized in a moment by the fiat of this absolutely lawless almighty Being.

But this is only a caricature of true theism. God is not a lawless and capricious almightiness, but the absolute Reason. And that which regulates and restricts his action is not intractable matter, but the principles and laws constitutive of his own eternal reason. Therefore they regulate the action of his power without limiting or conditioning him by any reality independent of himself.

And if the absolute Being were a lawless and almighty caprice, the universe could not be constituted rationally and be intelligible through and through to reason, as it now is; it could not be a system, physical or rational, capable of being known in science or of progressively realizing a rational end.

But because almightiness is regulated by reason, there is scope for wisdom in planning, creating and developing the universe, and this wisdom the universe reveals to scientific investigation. Then there are principles of reason which make the absurd impossible, and moral laws which forbid wrong-doing. Then any created universe must be finite and progressively developed; and the effects of almighty power must be commensurate with the constitution and capacity of the beings on and through whom it acts; it must work its way progressively to its proposed results, and at every point in its progress it must always be incomplete. Then there will be also what Hamilton has called incompossibility, as the impossibility of two bodies occupying the same place at once; or, when a young man has two lines of business open to him for his life-work, if he chooses the one he must give up for all time the other. Each is possible in itself, but impossible with the other. Whatever influences for good the almighty may bring to bear on rational free agents, he must leave them to determine for themselves their own action, character and destiny. Almighty power cannot change the determination of the will of any other person. Any change so effected would not be the act of the person but of the almighty power that effected the change. Thus innumerable problems present themselves which wisdom only can solve, and principles and laws regulate and restrict

the action of almightiness. It is not almighty caprice. Yet because this regulation is by the Reason itself, which is energizing in the universe, it does not limit God or bring him under conditions in the exercise of his almightiness, in a way incompatible with his absoluteness, but rather reveals him as the absolute Spirit, perfect in knowledge and love and acting always in unerring wisdom with almighty power.

II. Freedom. — God's will, in his own free choice, is in eternal harmony with his reason. His love is not a physical necessity, — as trees grow, and as water runs down-hill, — it is his rational free choice.

The fact that the choice is eternal is not incompatible with its freedom. Choice, as directing energy to an end, is in its nature abiding. A good man's choice of his neighbor equally with himself as the object of service abides through life. A saint in heaven chooses God as the supreme object of trust and service, and this choice will remain unchanged for ever. Persistence being of the essence of choice, its persistence, whether longer or shorter, does not change its freedom as choice. Whenever it comes up in the person's consciousness, he is conscious of it as his own free choice. God's choice in harmony with reason is his love. The choice is eternal, but it is eternally free.

And there is nothing essential in free will rightly defined which is incompatible with the freedom of God's will in his choice in eternal harmony with reason in love. Freedom is essential in the idea of will. The definition of will is the definition of free will. Will is a power self-directing and self-exerting in the light of reason. It is reason energizing. Rationality is of the essence of free will. Freedom is inherent in rationality. Whether a choice continue a longer or shorter time, it is a continuous free choice. God's choice in harmony with reason is eternal. But its eternity does not require the change of a syllable in the right definition of free will.

The belief that God's choice cannot be free because it is eternal is founded always on some false idea of free will. Professor Haeckel says: "God is absolutely perfect. His action, therefore, can never be otherwise than perfectly right. Therefore he can never act arbitrarily or freely. That is to say, God is

necessity."[1] This rests on the supposition that free will, in order to be free, must be mere caprice; that it is free only when it is in an equipoise of indifference; that it must be always without character, as ready to choose wrong as to choose right, and in entire indifference as to which to choose. It assumes that as soon as a man has any preference or any character he ceases to be free. It assumes that God, if free, must be an almighty caprice, acting without reason, without character, and without law. Kant intimates that we may not attribute will to God: "For I have this conception only in so far as I derive it from my inner experience. But therewith must underlie it, as its ground, dependence of my satisfaction on objects which we need, and therefore sensibility, which is utterly contradictory to the pure idea of the Supreme Being."[2] But this assumes that will is identical with desire, — that it is merely the optative part of our nature. It entirely misses the essential significance of will as power illuminated with reason, — as reason itself energizing; or, as Kant himself named it in a later work, the practical reason. According to the true idea of free will, the duration of a choice, however long, the fixedness of character, however complete, do not imply the loss of a single element essential to free will.[3]

Any philosophical theory of the will which involves a logical necessity of denying the free agency of God is thereby proved to be false. For if God is not a free agent he is not a personal or moral being; he is not a rational Spirit. It also involves with equal logical necessity the denial that man is free. If the universe is grounded in necessity and not in rational freedom, free agency can never find place in it anywhere.

It follows that God's love, which is his eternal free choice in harmony with reason, is not the result of the impossibility of his sinning; but the impossibility of his sinning is the result of his eternal free choice in love. And in this eternal free choice we see the significance of the saying that in God the highest necessity coincides with the highest freedom.

[1] Generelle Morphologie der Organismen, vol. ii. Bk. viii. chap. 30, p. 451.

[2] Prolegomena zu jeden künftigen Metaphysik, § 57, Werke (Leipzig, 1838), vol. iii. p. 282.

[3] For a discussion of the will, its functions and freedom, and its relation to moral character, see "The Philosophical Basis of Theism," chap. xv. pp. 349–407.

III. Love. — We come here to the so-called moral attributes of God.

1. Love is the generic name of God's perfect moral character. It is so used in the Bible: "God is Love." Love also comprehends all that is required in God's universal moral law (Matth. xxii. 35–40); and that law must be the true exponent of God's moral perfection. It is to be regretted that writers on theology and ethics do not commonly use the word love in this generic meaning. On the contrary, they often treat love as a particular virtue, one among many. Thus they bring love into antithesis, and even into antagonism, to righteousness and justice, and so into antagonism to law itself and its authoritative enforcement. They seem to forget that the law itself is the law of love; that its real principle is its requirement of universal love; that, according to the teachings of Christ, and also of the Old Testament, love comprehends in principle all which the law commands. By using the word love with this generic meaning we get a concrete reality and vividness in our ethical conception of God which we miss when we use the abstract phrases, "moral attributes," "moral perfection," "moral character," which do not specify what his moral perfection is.

Holiness, on account of its etymological affinity with *hale*, *heal*, and *whole*, may properly be used to denote God's moral perfection in its integrity or wholeness, and for convenience I may sometimes so use it. But it more commonly denotes purity from sin, and the recoil of a pure soul from it.

Love is the generic name of the attributes of God which have been called moral in distinction from the natural attributes. It is not constitutive of personality, as are reason and will, — it is character. But this character is an essential and eternal attribute of God. Without it a being, however knowing and mighty, could not be God, the absolute and all-perfect Spirit. Love is of the essence of the idea of God.

2. The love recognized in the law as the essence of moral character is, psychologically defined, the self-directing determination of a rational free will. It is thus distinguished from natural or instinctive appetites, desires, and affections, which in popular usage are often called love, as one loves an apple, he loves money. God's love is his eternal choice, in which he determines or directs his energy to the realization, in rational beings in a moral system,

of all perfection and good possible in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason. God's love is his eternal free determination of the action of his entire personality, of his absolute reason and his almighty power, to the realization of the ideals and ends of perfect reason in personal beings composing the moral system and existing in the physical universe which he has created for their abode and use. This love is his rational choice, which at once impels and directs him in all his action. His self-determination to create and govern the universe is his love. In this love he determines to create the universe for the abode of personal beings, in his likeness, who can know him and be the recipients of his gracious influence, and to open to them all the possibilities of citizens in the kingdom, and of children in the family, of God. As the absolute Being, he has no needs which he is dependent on others to supply. His action, therefore, is never a seeking and getting for himself, but always a forthputting and imparting to others. In his all-sufficiency, blessedness, and lordship, he will not be blessed alone, but will create a universe of being, and in it rational persons to whom he can communicate of his fulness, and whom he can make participants of his love and blessedness. Thus his love is totally unselfish and disinterested; it is pure, absolute, self-moved love.

It is often objected that love cannot exist unless there exists some other person as its object; that, therefore, God could not have been actuated by love in creating the universe, because no being other than himself existed as the object of his love. But love is the choice of the supreme object of the activity and energy. God eternally chooses to realize his archetypal ideal of the universe culminating in the kingdom of God, embracing innumerable millions of rational beings like himself who will know God, be developed into his likeness in love and blessed with him through endless time. Certainly God's character as love is as really manifested in his eternal self-determination to realize this grand ideal, including the perfection and blessedness of these millions, as it is after he has brought them into being. The objection is frivolous. It is of the same type with the ethics which teaches that man can feel no good-will toward any persons or any generation existing after he himself is dead.

3. Love to a person expresses itself in two lines of action, — trust and service. All human action is included in two lines, —

reception and production, taking in and giving out. The receptive action directed towards a person is trust, the productive action exerted for a person is service. Love is the free choice of a person as the object of trust and service. Since God is independent and unconditioned by any power or reality independent of himself, his action is ever productive, putting forth. In creating and evolving the universe he is always acting in the finite, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up. God's action, therefore, is pre-eminently service. Accordingly when he revealed himself acting under human limitations and conditions in Christ, "he took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). Service is godlike. God's action in love is also trust. Those who accept his redeeming grace and begin the life of love he accepts "as workers together with him," as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. vi. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 3). As such he trusts them with the responsibility and dignity of being workers for him, "mighty through God to the casting down of strong holds" of iniquity, not with carnal but with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. x. 4). Thus God is receptive of the loving service of those whom he has redeemed, trusts them with great responsibilities in the advancement of his kingdom, rejoices over every sinner who repents, and admits him to confidential intimacy with himself.

4. God's love presents two aspects, righteousness and benevolence or good-will. It is righteousness in that it is commanded by the supreme and inviolable law of Reason and regulated by it in all its action. God, by his own free self-determination, directs his energy in harmony with the principles and laws of reason to the realization of its ideals of perfection and of the good which reason approves as having true worth to rational beings. Directing his energy according to these eternal laws, for these rational and worthy ends, he constitutes the universe according to the same. When he has brought rational beings into existence, he maintains and enforces the law of love as the supreme and unchangeable law to all the spiritual system. As thus directing his own energies according to the principles and law of reason, and maintaining and enforcing this law throughout the spiritual system, he is righteous. His love itself, as his choice in harmony with reason, is righteousness.

God's love is also benevolence or good-will, because in it he determines or directs his energy to the realization of perfection

and good for all his creatures, so far as possible in accordance with the principles and laws of reason.

Righteousness, and benevolence or good-will, are both included in love; they are simply two aspects of it. It is common for theologians and preachers to speak of righteousness as distinct and excluded from love; they habitually put God's righteousness into antithesis, and even antagonism, to his love. But righteousness is love in one of its aspects. It is love required by the eternal law and freely exercised in willing obedience to it. And God's righteousness, in enforcing the law throughout the universe by the punishment of transgressors, is love, maintaining and enforcing the law which requires love. Therefore love is universal good-will regulated in its exercise by righteousness.

In God's love "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm lxxxv. 10). Righteousness, even in maintaining and enforcing the law by punishment, is exercised in an atmosphere of benevolence. Christ weeping over Jerusalem, yet not averting the punishment which by persisting in their wickedness its inhabitants brought on themselves, is the true exponent to us of the righteousness of God in punishing transgressors. And benevolence is in harmony with righteousness, because perfection and good are possible in this universe only in accordance with the principles and laws of reason which are the constitution of the universe. A good-will which seeks to secure to men happiness any other wise than in conformity with eternal truth and law is a mistaken benevolence which defeats itself and brings on its object evil instead of good; and equally the person exercising this false good-will brings evil and not good upon himself. The universe is constituted according to law. Therefore there is no place and no time in all the universe in which a person can be blessed even for an instant in a life of selfishness. Blessedness is possible only in a life of love to God and man. If this could be otherwise, the constitution of the universe would be broken up and the universe resolved into chaos.

Love in these two aspects is like electricity. In its ordinary action, coursing silently through all nature, it brings only blessing. But when interrupted, it smites in the thunderbolt. And its power to bless depends on its capacity thus to smite. Righteousness and good-will are in harmony, like light and heat. They

give light to all eyes and quicken and sustain all life and growth; but when accumulated they dazzle to blindness and consume with fire. And their power to bless depends on their power to dazzle and consume. When "God is a consuming fire," it is his love which is the burning fire.

These two aspects of love, righteousness and benevolence, expressed in acts of trust and service, are the true basis for the complete classification of duties or virtues in ethical philosophy.

There is now a marked trend of thought to present the Fatherhood of God as the name comprehending all his moral attributes, and to maintain that the revelation that God is our Father is the great and distinctive revelation of Christianity. But this is not accordant with the Bible. The name that is above every name is not God our Father, but God in Christ our Redeemer (Phil. ii. 9; Eph. i. 21). And God was revealed as our Father in the Old Testament, and his claims as such urged with tenderness and eloquence. It is but one of many representations of God by which in various aspects he is revealed in the Bible: father, mother, husband, shepherd, king, judge, lawgiver. Even our Aryan ancestors in heathenism knew God as father, as all-father, and as heaven-father. The designation of father was applied to the gods by the Greeks and Romans. Epictetus said, God is ever the father of men. It is not, therefore, peculiar to Christianity. This type of thought is sometimes presented as throwing into the background, or even setting aside, the righteousness and law of God. It is true that the idea of God, our Father, is not incompatible with the idea of law; for a father exercises authority over his family. Some of those who emphasize the fatherhood of God may have no thought of depreciating his righteousness and law, but only of presenting the truth that the righteousness of God is always exercised in an atmosphere of benevolence. God always exercises good-will to all his creatures. He can exercise malevolence or malignity toward none. But the tendency to depreciate God's righteousness and law is sometimes obtrusive. President Bascom says: "The ease with which the mind dwarfs a truth as yet too large for it, is seen in the cunning mechanism of law which theology has built up between man and God, — a mechanism so difficult of management that neither man nor God, nor both conjointly, can handle it without terrible loss." [1] But law is

[1] The Words of Christ, p. 49.

eternal and unchangeable in God, the absolute Reason; it is the constitution of the universe, whereby alone it is possible for man to have a scientific knowledge of it, possible that there should be a moral or spiritual system, or any fundamental distinction of right and wrong, or any reality in the supreme and universal law of love. The law itself to all rational beings is the law of love; it is the law of reason which is the constitution of the universe. How, then, is law a mechanism built up by theologians between man and God? And what but disaster to every interest of morals and religion can come from any teaching which disparages or obscures the righteousness and law of God? Such teaching contradicts alike the Holy Scriptures, and the principles of reason which are the foundation of physical science, of speculative and ethical philosophy, and of all knowledge and religious worship of the true God. It is pre-eminently contrary to scientific thought, which finds the whole universe under law. It is true now, as it was in the days of Richard Hooker: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."[1]

God's righteousness, therefore, is the harmony of his will with his eternal reason in his own free and never-changing choice. His righteousness is essential in his love. A good-will that is lawless must bring a curse and not a blessing. And the law itself, which is asserted, maintained, and enforced by all the authority and power of God as inviolable, is the law of universal love.

Here we see the atoning significance of God's action in Christ redeeming men from sin. Therein he reveals himself acting under human limitations and conditions in good-will even to sinners to save them from sin. At the same time he reveals himself also acting in obedience to the law of love, to the utmost extent possible under human limitations and conditions, even unto death. Thus he reveals his righteousness not less than his benevolence, controlling and regulating his benevolence in all its exercise. Therein he asserts, vindicates, and maintains the supremacy,

[1] Ecclesiastical Polity, Bk. i. chap. xvi. 8.

immutability, and inviolable authority of the law of love in the redemption of men from sin, and in justifying those who accept his grace and return to conformity with the law in the life of love. This is the atoning significance of his redemptive action in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. But in all his action in his moral government of rational persons, and in constituting and evolving the universe, he reveals his good-will regulated by righteousness in strict accordance with the eternal law as really as in redeeming man from sin. Therefore the atoning significance of God's action in Christ redeeming men from sin pertains simply to a peculiar revelation and exercise of God's good-will, regulated in its exercise by righteousness in strict accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason, which is the essence of God's moral character as love and is exercised and revealed in all his moral government and in all his action creating and evolving the universe.

CHAPTER VI

GOD IS A SPIRIT: — FEELING

This attribute of God corresponds to man's susceptibility to rational motives and emotions, or the capacity of spiritual feeling.

1. This is an essential attribute of personal spirit, and not peculiar to the finite personality of man. It is, therefore, consistent with the absoluteness of God.

We attribute to God as personal only those powers and capacities which are of the essence of personal spirit. Some deny that personality is compatible with the absoluteness of God, because they erroneously assume that finiteness is of the essence of personality. But the limitations of man are not of the essence of personality; they are merely incidental to the personality of man as a finite being.[1]

This attribute, commonly called the capacity of feeling, is of the essence of self-conscious life. We have more difficulty in adjusting our thought to the idea of God as susceptible of feeling, than to the conception of him as reason and free will. But this susceptibility does not involve an inadmissible anthropomorphism any more than do reason and will. It is essential in the idea of spirit as living and self-conscious. A being without capacity of feeling or susceptibility of motives and emotions would rest in entire indifference to everything. It would have no motive to create. If it should create anything, it would be totally indifferent to the creation and to its own action in creating it. It would have no interest in its creatures, no motive to action, no end to be attained by action. It would be the God of Epicurus, not active in the universe, totally indifferent to everything in it. Right character and wrong, happiness and misery, would be alike to it. Plainly such a being cannot be God, the absolute Spirit. There-

[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," pp. 210–216, 334–339.

fore, instead of this attribute being incompatible with the absoluteness of God, it is a perfection essential to his self-conscious life as the absolute Spirit. As it would be a limitation of God if he could not act and cause effects in time and space, so it would be a limitation if he were incapable of feeling, if we could attribute to him no capacity corresponding to man's susceptibility to motives and emotions. As Archdeacon Hare said of the speculative denial of God's susceptibility to feeling as inconsistent with his absoluteness, "in its recoil from the gross anthropopathy of the vulgar notions, it falls into the vacuum of absolute apathy."

2. Because God is a Spirit his feelings will be essentially the same in kind with the spiritual motives and emotions of the ideally perfect man, excepting only what is incidental to the finiteness of the man. That is, God's feelings, if exercised under human limitations and conditions, would be the same with those of the sinless and perfect man. Even in man not yet perfected and delivered completely from the power of sin this may be illustrated. It may be illustrated from the enthusiasm of scientific and philosophical investigation. This is exemplified in Kepler's devout rapture in his discoveries. "What I conjectured two-and-twenty years ago, as soon as I discovered the five geometrical solids among the heavenly orbits; what I was firmly persuaded of in my own mind before I had seen the "Harmonics" of Ptolemy; what I had promised to my friends in the title of this fifth book, named before I was certain of the thing itself; what, sixteen years ago, I publicly urged as a matter to be investigated; that for which I have devoted the best part of my life to astronomical studies, for which I joined Tycho Brahe, for which I chose Prague as my residence, — this, God, who inspired my mind and excited my great desire, having prolonged my life and intellectual vigor, this, I say, at length I have now brought to light, and established its truth beyond all I could ever hope. . . . It is now eighteen months since the first gleam of the dawn, three months since the broad daylight, but a few days since the clear sun burst on me, most admirable to behold. Nothing restrains me; I will indulge the sacred fury; I will triumph over mankind with the honest confession that I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians that I may build a tabernacle for my God far from the boundaries of Egypt. If you forgive me I will rejoice; if you are angry I will bear it; I cast the die; I write the book, to be read,

whether now or by posterity I care not. I may well wait a hundred years for a reader since God himself has waited six thousand years for an observer." [1] The likeness of the divine feeling to the higher feelings of men may be illustrated also from the interest felt by man in realizing the creations of æsthetic art or of industrial invention; in doing duty; in the self-forgetfulness of love; in enthusiasm for humanity and working for its progress to its highest ends; in the ecstasy of religious faith and the strength and joy of its works of love and service. In every line of the rational and spiritual life the man is lifted above the lower impulses of his nature and the discontent of never-satisfied wants, and finds blessedness in himself and in developing his own spiritual resources and work. And his devotion to rational and spiritual ends confers dignity on the humblest position and the lowest surroundings. The light within, like the sun, illumines and glorifies the lowest sphere and the smallest affairs. Without this the greatest magnificence of outward condition is ignoble. And when adherence to truth and duty and persistence in a noble aim involve resistance to powerful temptations and struggle with evil impulses, when faithfulness in Christian service involves self-sacrifice, then the joy takes on the exultation of victory. One never feels himself more, is never more conscious of fulness of life and power, than in self-denial in doing duty, and self-sacrifice in the service of love.

Much more may God, the absolute Spirit, be blessed in himself in what he is and what he does, realizing the ideals and ends of perfect reason in the light of perfect truth and in the action of perfect wisdom and love, and may rejoice in his work with a joy surpassing all human enthusiasm as much as the absolute surpasses the finite.

3. This attribute of God implies that God is responsive to the action of his creatures. As independent of the universe, God is blessed in himself. His action is giving out, not receiving. But the universe, after it has been created, has a reality in itself and objective to God, though always dependent on him. Then God is receptive from his creatures and responsive to their action.

[1] Harmonices Mundi, Lib. v. Procemium, pp. 178, 179. In his reference to the Egyptians he alludes to the fact that in some mathematical conclusions in this third book he had been anticipated by Ptolemy; though he did not know it till after the book was written.

At the successive epochs in creating and evolving the universe, "God saw that it was very good" (Gen. i. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31); he rejoices in the work of his hands; the upright in their way are his delight; the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. He hears the prayers of men, accepts with approval their loving trust and service, and has that interest in them which he expresses by calling himself their father, husband, shepherd, judge, king; by comparing his love to that of a mother (Isa. xlix. 15); and by all his action redeeming them from sin through Christ and the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Bible. This receptivity is not the receptivity of dependence and need, but of love and its overflowing fulness, receiving trust and service that he may bless, permitting men to cast their care on him because he cares for them. This receptivity is not incompatible with God's absoluteness, but a positive perfection essential to him as the all-perfect God, the Lord of all.

Plato conceived of the universe as a living being. He wanted in the universe, not a dead wall of matter, but a life and heart responsive to his own. Instead of this conception of Plato, Christ reveals to us the conscious, living God immanent and active in the universe, as all-pervasive and vitalizing as the heart's blood in the human body. So in this immanence of the divine the living heart of the universe responds with living, conscious interest to the good man's prayer of faith and service of love, and to the sinner's penitent cry for help, and reacts against the wicked man's self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking and self-glorifying.

4. God's capacity for feeling is free from all limitations incident to human finiteness.

First, God is not susceptible of any feeling belonging exclusively to the physical life of man. God is pure Spirit. He does not participate in the life of nature, but transcends it. He exists in no environment on which he is dependent. He is conscious of no want. He is not the subject of any uneasiness arising from a sense of want, nor of any desire which is the expression of such uneasiness and impels to seek satisfaction from without.

In the lowest forms of religion, the god is supposed to be participant in the life of nature, even to the extent of being hungry and thirsty. The sacrifices and libations are offered to satisfy the craving of the god. He snuffs the savory odors and is well

pleased. The writer of the fiftieth Psalm, having probably found this gross conception lingering among the heathen around him, rebukes it in sublime and poetical language. But it is as really heathenish to ascribe to God any participation in the life of nature, or any desire arising from a sense of want and requiring satisfaction from without. His whole action would then be a getting and sucking in, not a giving and putting forth. He would no longer be acting in freedom as Spirit, but under the necessity of nature, like a brute. The sense of want acts instinctively; it is above the animal, and impels and rules it; it must be satisfied from without; the uneasiness of the want is the positive impulse, and the enjoyment attained is merely the removal of an uneasiness in the satisfaction of the want. This is the life of nature impelled by impulse from without, not regulating itself in freedom. To this level God is supposed to be reduced by every conception of him as having wants and impelled by uneasiness to supply them. He becomes an infinite receptivity, an abyss of emptiness, swallowing up everything but never filled; an infinitude of desires, forever craving but never satisfied. His whole existence would reveal to him the truth of pessimism, and force on him the conviction that life, though everlasting, is not worth living. Such a being cannot be God. He would be such a being as is described in the words which Byron attributes to Satan: —

> He is great,
> But in his greatness is no happier than
> We in our conflict . . .
> Let him
> Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
> Creating worlds to make eternity
> Less burdensome to his immense existence
> And unparticipated solitude.
> Let him crowd orb on orb; he is alone . . .
> Could he but crush himself, 't were the best boon
> He ever granted; but let him reign on,
> And multiply himself in misery!
> . . . He is so wretched in his height,
> So restless in his wretchedness, must still
> Create and recreate. — *Cain*, I. i.

This misconception of God has been prolific of errors in theology and of delusions in religion. Underlying it is the false ethical conception that God's chief end in all he does is his own

happiness; from which a necessary inference would be that he punishes sinners solely because he enjoys doing it, and, if he remits their punishment, must punish Christ in their stead to satisfy a want, his otherwise insatiable desire to inflict suffering for the offence given him by sinners. Thus God comes to be regarded as a Great Nature (Gross Natur, as some German writers actually call him), necessarily unrolling under the influence of wants, passions, and desires, which can be satisfied only from without.

Because God can have no sense of want, Strauss infers that he can have no intelligent aim for action and no motive to act, and that therefore he cannot cause any effect nor use means to attain any end. The pantheistic conclusion would necessarily follow, that the absolute Being is only the Unconscious, blindly and necessarily evolving into all that is.[1] But this conclusion by no means follows from the true conception of God as above the limitations of the life of nature. Though God does not participate in the life of nature, and has no wants, yet, as the absolute Spirit, he acts in the light of reason and has rational ends in his own wisdom and love. The universe is not an end in itself; it is the medium in which he is realizing the archetype of perfection and good eternal in his own reason; that is, expressing his own perfection in the action of his own wisdom and love. And when Strauss says that in any action of God the end would be the means, and the means would be the end, the truth in the saying is simply that both the rational ideals and ends to be realized and the means of realizing them are alike included in God's archetypal thought, and that neither the means nor the end has any existence independent of God.

A second limitation excluded from the feeling of God is suffering.

It is involved in the idea of God as the absolute Being that he cannot suffer. The same is involved in the idea of God as the all-perfect Being. The consciousness of unerring knowledge, of being in harmony with reason, of possessing all perfection, the

[1] Strauss, "Glaubenslehre," vol. i. p. 576. K. I. Nitzsch refers to this argument of Strauss as frivolous ("sehr unerheblich," "System der Christlichen Lehre," § 75, p. 165). It is not very uncommon to find, both in German speculative philosophy and in German biblical criticism, momentous conclusions resting on superficial or fallacious reasoning or on the slightest basis of fact. They are valuable helpers, but dangerous masters.

consciousness that all his action is in its true character and intent promotive of perfection and good, the consciousness of universal love, must exclude all suffering. And if it were possible for God, the absolute Being, to suffer, it would necessarily be an infinite suffering, greater, by the measure of the greatness of the infinite above the finite, than the sufferings of all finite beings.

It is objected that the knowledge of the sin and sorrow of his creatures must occasion grief in God. The answer is that it does occasion that tenderness of compassion which, under human limitations, would be sorrow. But it is free from all elements of suffering peculiar to finite beings.

It may be added that even under human limitations love is in its exercise blessed. It is so even in conflict with sin and under the disappointments, losses, and suffering incident to mortality. Christians have gloried in tribulation, and taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and perhaps the sublimest joy ever experienced by man has been the joy of martyrs going to the stake for Christ. Love also makes toil and sacrifice for the loved easy; and the loving heart rejoices in the opportunity for service. And there is a power in the service of love to absorb emotion. This is true of service of any kind. If the horses run, he who holds the reins is steady, because the energy expended in managing the horses absorbs his emotion. The one who sits inactive at his side is terrified. A mother's grief is absorbed in her active service of her sick child. The surgeon's hand may tremble; but when he begins the critical operation the feeling is absorbed and every nerve is steady. So, in Christian service, the emotion excited by the sight of the sinful and suffering is absorbed in the energy expended in saving them. Paul, carrying to wretched men the gospel of Christ and setting up his kingdom in the world lying in wickedness, and in doing this having suffered the loss of all things, without a home, in journeyings oft, in perils of every kind by land and sea, defamed, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, was yet living a life of conscious achievement, of exultant victory, of triumphant expectation, and was probably the most sublimely blessed man of his generation. Such facts open lines of thought whereby we see that God, in the ceaseless energizing of his love, may have a tenderness of compassion for sinners and an earnestness of indignation against sin infinitely greater than is expressed by these words as measured by human feeling, and yet

be blessed in himself and his work of love. Love is the absorbent of sorrow. Love is blessedness in itself. Infinite love is infinite blessedness.

Of the saints in heaven it is said: "God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." [1] If it is possible thus for finite beings to cease from tears and sorrow in the presence and service of God in heaven, how much more may all sorrow be absorbed in the intensity of God's infinite love with which he is energizing in the universe. These considerations may help us to understand the possibility of God's blessedness in the presence of evil. But we cannot picture it. It is "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." [2]

A third limitation excluded from the feeling of God is fluctuation and passionateness. It does not come and go, flame up and die away. It does not alternate between excitement and apathy, passion and indifference.

There is dignity in sorrow when in the deepest woe the man is master of himself, retains his calmness, and does his work. Such may be the divine sorrow for man's sin and misery, never interrupted by excitement or passion, calm because infinitely deep. Indignation against injustice, oppression, and all wrong-doing, is inseparable from true manhood, as well as from true Godhood. He who cannot feel it lacks the very essence of a right moral character. It is not a burst of anger, sputtering fire and then going out. It is inwrought into the character of the man; it is always potentially present in his free allegiance to truth and right and in his love to God and man, as the power to burn is always present in the sunshine. Much more is indignation against wrong-doing an essential and unchanging potency in the eternal love of God. Its calmness and continuity are the hiding of its power.

In fact, fluctuation and passionateness are proof of weakness rather than of strength. Tears and crying are characteristics of infancy, not of maturity. And there is a sorrow too deep for tears. In the excitement of feeling one may lose his self-command, and act frantically rather than rationally. One may be crushed by sorrow so that he cannot do anything. One may be so agitated at the sight of suffering as to be unable to render help. Strong souls are not carried away with excitement, but are

[1] Rev. vii. 17. [2] Phil. iv. 7.

calm because they are strong. Their feeling, therefore, is not less but greater, calm and steady on account of its fulness and strength. In the lower stages of human development, the infancy of the race, men express without restraint the violence of their feelings. Job's three friends, when they saw him, "lifted up their voice and wept: and they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven."[1] Agamemnon and the other Homeric heroes wept and cried aloud. But as man advances in civilization he learns self-control; his feelings do not burst forth in tears and violent gestures and cries. And this is not a sign of weakness, but of increased self-mastery and power.

So Christ, amid all the sorrows incident to his humanity, always reveals the self-possession and calmness of strength. He wept; but it was for the sorrows and sins of others whom he came to save. Even in Gethsemane and on the cross his sorrow is self-possessed, majestic, and divine.

In these possibilities of human feeling we see that God's feeling may be without fluctuation, without alternation of excitement and depression; that in his eternal love may be all the tenderness for the weak and humble, all the indignation against the wicked which human feelings make conceivable, while he is always calm and strong, absolute in perfection and blessedness. Fluctuation and passion are absent, not on account of the absence of feeling, but on account of its infinite fulness and perfection. "The crackling of thorns under a pot" is no evidence of great heat. The sun is not less hot because its heat is steady and permanent. The Bible speaks of God's wrath against sinners, and declares, "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). His antagonism to sin and indignation against it are eternal and unchangeable. Doubtless in its unchanging steadiness it is as much more powerful than any righteous indignation of man as the heat of the sun is greater than that of a flickering taper.

Rev. Edward White says the doctrine that God is impassive and insensible to real delight or sorrow is the Buddhism of the West and makes God an infinite Snow-King.[2] Yet he has fallen into serious errors as to what God's feeling is; and errors of this type are common in theology. He supposes that the love which is required in God's law and is the essence of God's moral per-

[1] Job ii. 12.

[2] Life in Christ, pp. 255–260.

fection is a feeling, not a rational free choice. Hence he must interpret all which the Bible says of God's love as said of his feelings or sensibilities. Thus he confounds God's love and all spiritual love with natural instinctive affection. And because brutes have natural affections the same in kind with man's, he leaves us nothing by which to distinguish God's love, as different in kind, from a beast's instinctive love of its offspring. It is true that feeling accompanies the spiritual love, as it does all man's mental acts; but the essential and central act of love, which constitutes its moral character, is rational free choice. And it is indispensable to all true Christian ethics and to all right conception of the love of God, to recognize this truth. The author also errs in teaching that the doctrine that God has feeling necessarily implies that he suffers not only sorrow but also pain. And his language implies that fluctuation and passionateness are of the essence of God's feeling, and that the denial of these is a denial of the feeling itself. The inference is that if God's feelings do not fluctuate and are not passionate, if God is not like a weak person who loses his self-mastery, breaks down, and cries, he has no love to man. But we have seen that God has feeling, but exempt from suffering and fluctuation and all limitation and imperfection peculiar to the sensibility of finite man.

It has been objected that if God has feeling, he must be changeable; because, after a sinner has returned to God in faith and repentance, God cannot have the same feelings toward him as he had before. But even under human limitations a righteous man does not change, because he has complacency in a person so long as he does right and displacency toward him when he does wrong. The change is in the man who does wrong, not in the righteous man. On the contrary, the righteous man would himself be changed into an unrighteous one if he did not feel displacency toward the person after he had done the wrong. And there is no change in God because he has complacency in the penitent, and displacency toward him so long as he persisted impenitent in his wrong-doing.

5. God is moved to action in creation, providential and moral government, and redemption, not by any natural instinct or blind constitutional impulse, but by his own eternal, self-moved, disinterested love.

God's love is not a feeling, but a rational free choice. This is

true of the love required of men by God's law, which constitutes right character. Human love as a natural affection is an instinctive, constitutional impulse, common to man with the brutes, and is properly classed with the feelings. But the love required of man as a personal spirit by the law of God is his rational free choice of God as the supreme object of trust and service, and of his neighbor as equally with himself the object of trust and service in the moral system under the government of God. Much more the love which we ascribe to God, the absolute Spirit, cannot be a mere feeling, but must be a choice.[1] Thus God is not moved to action by any natural instinct or blind constitutional impulse. He is moved to act by his own eternal and free determination in the light of absolute reason directing his energies in harmony with its eternal principles, laws, ideals, and ends. This choice, eternally luminous with all wisdom and all knowledge, and eternally free in directing his almighty energies, is his eternal love.

Therefore God is not to be conceived as ever undetermined between conflicting motives, making a choice, and so forming a character in time. This is a necessary limitation of finite persons, but not of God. His love is his eternal free choice. In the order of human thought God's choice is preceded by rational motives. He is eternally interested in truth, right, perfection, and good. But in the order of time there is no such precedence. Both his interest in rational ends and his choice of them in love are eternal, transcending time. Hence God's love does not spring from his blessedness nor from his desire to be blessed, but his blessedness is involved in his love and inseparable from it. Therefore that which impels God to act is not any blind impulse or instinct of constitutional feeling, but it is his free rational choice; and that choice is love. It is love which moves God in creating and in all which he does. We see some faint analogy to this in the finite person, who is perfected in moral character and acts in the spontaneity of perfect love. That which moves him to act is no longer the constitutional impulse, but the perfected character, the free and rational choice in love. There are no more hesitation and indecision in the balancing of motives. There is no longer even the thought of law and duty.

[1] See Chap. v. III. 2, and "Philosophical Basis of Theism," chap. xv. pp. 351–361; 396–399.

The motives once so carefully pondered have melted into the spontaneity and energy of the love. The light of reason and the heat of love blend indissolubly in the sunshine of the perfect character. So they are eternally blended in God, whose character was never formed or perfected in time, but is perfect eternally in his own free choice in love.

Here we see from a new point of view that God's love is absolutely disinterested. He has no wants. He does not seek men in redemption because their salvation is necessary to his own happiness, for he is eternally blessed in himself. He seeks to redeem men in pure disinterested love to them unmingled with any sense of his own need. It is not want which impels him. And it is not fulness which by any constitutional necessity must overflow. Absolute disinterested love moves him to forthputting and blessing in creating and governing the universe; and still further in coming into humanity in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

> "Nothing brought him from above,
> Nothing but redeeming love."

6. Christ is the exponent, under human limitations and conditions, of what God is. As soon as God comes into humanity revealing his love in Christ, it is a suffering and sacrificial love even to the extreme of giving up his life for men. The necessary inference is that there must be in God's love that which corresponds to human love in suffering and self-sacrifice for those who are loved; though, when existing in the absolute Being, it cannot manifest itself in suffering as it does in humanity. We know that in its essence it is the same with the love manifested by Christ, the man of sorrows, suffering in self-sacrifice even unto death. We can picture it as it would be under human limitations and conditions, not as it is in the absolute blessedness of God. Therefore we properly use the scriptural representations of God, and speak of his compassion and pity, his mercy and grace, of his being grieved with our sins, of his patience and long-suffering, of his indignation and wrath against sin. We may ascribe to him love, as universal good-will regulated in its exercise by righteousness, in all the human forms in which it is manifested in Jesus Christ.

God declares that his love exceeds that of a mother for her

child: "She may forget, yet will not I forget thee." The mother who has a wayward and wicked son is in anguish on account of him and so continuously "bears his sin" in her own personal suffering for him; and in compassion and good-will she continually tries by every means in her power to save him from his wickedness and ruin. So God in Christ bears the sins of men while seeking to save them. Herein Christ is the exponent to us of God's feelings. The agony of Christ in Gethsemane we must suppose was the anguish of his spirit in view of the sinfulness of men made in the likeness of God and sought by him in love, yet renouncing him and using the divine powers and susceptibilities with which he has endowed them only to sin against him, to oppose him in all that he does to realize his grand ideal of the kingdom of God on earth, and rejecting and crucifying him in whom God had come as their redeemer to save them from sin. This anguish of Christ is the true exponent to us of God's feeling in view of human sin, ever bearing the sin of men on his heart in loving sorrow. This divine sorrow, expressed in Christ under human conditions and limitations, is the agony in Gethsemane. When Christ wept over Jerusalem, but could not deliver the people from the inevitable consequences of their persistence in sin, he expressed what God's sorrow in punishing the wicked would be if manifested under human conditions and limitations, "reluctant wrath," which cannot be changed into approval unless God should act contrary to the fundamental principles of reason and to the constitution of the universe, and so crush the universe into chaos. When Christ looked on the people in a synagogue with indignation, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts, when he said, "Woe, unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," it was the expression of God's eternal and intense antagonism to all sin as well as of his sorrow for the sinners, as these feelings would be expressed under human limitations and conditions. When he wept at the grave of Lazarus he expressed in human tears God's sympathy with men in bereavement and sorrow. When he healed the sick, when he attended the wedding in Cana, when he dined both with Pharisees and with publicans, when he took little children in his arms and blessed them, when he led a blind man by the hand through the streets of a village and then in a retired place restored his sight, when he taught men respecting God and his kingdom, when he suffered even unto death to save men from

sin, he opened to men's view the very heart of God, he expressed to them God's eternal and never-changing feelings as they would be expressed if exercised under human limitations and conditions.

The conclusion is that God is susceptible of feeling, which under human limitations and conditions would be the feeling of the human spirit as it is manifested in Christ; not changed in essence or lessened in degree by the fact that God is the absolute Being, but greatened to infinite fulness; unchanged and unruffled in eternal peace, because its fulness makes it impossible that it should be greater, and God's perfection as the absolute Spirit, whose delight is with the sons of men, makes it impossible it should be less. And because the spiritual motives and emotions of men as manifested in Christ are the real exponents of the feeling of God, the anthropomorphic representations of it in the Bible are accordant alike with devout religion, true philosophy and sound theology. They present a reality essential in every worthy conception of God; but in interpreting them we must clear them of all human weakness, imperfection, and limitation.

CHAPTER VII

THEODICY: — THE JUSTIFYING OF GOD TO MAN.

THEODICY is the justifying of God to man. Especially it is the vindication of God's love, in answer to objections founded on the existence of suffering and sin, by showing the harmony of the universe in its constitution and ongoing with his righteousness and benevolence. The Christian is a witness for God rather than his judge or even his advocate. But it is not presumptuous to justify God against objectors who allege that facts both in the physical and spiritual systems are incompatible with his love.

The ethical principles underlying the evidence that God is love, and to a considerable extent the evidence itself, have already been examined.[1] I present in this chapter some additional aspects of the evidence in vindication of his righteousness and good-will against objections.

I. THE BASIS OF THEODICY. — The basis of all true theodicy is the supremacy of absolute Reason. The vindication of God's love in the presence of sin and suffering rests on the facts already established, that God is the absolute Spirit in whom the principles, laws, and ideals of reason are eternal and immutable; that the universe is ultimately grounded in absolute Reason and pervaded and regulated by it.

1. The skeptic presents his objection in the form of a dilemma: Either God could have prevented sin and evil but would not, if so he is not benevolent; or he would have prevented them but could not, and if so he is not almighty. It is boasted that this position is impregnable, "the Gibraltar of unbelief."

[1] Philosophical Basis of Theism, chap. ix. pp. 185-226; The Self-Revelation of God, chap. xii. xiii. xiv.

The fact that God is the absolute Reason completely dissolves the dilemma proposed by the skeptic, and overthrows his boasted impregnable fortress. The objection does not establish a complete dilemma between a defect either in God's power or his benevolence.

This is evident, because it entirely overlooks the supremacy of the divine reason regulating all action under unchangeable law. The objector regards God as arbitrary, capricious, lawless almightiness. He conceives that if this lawless one should become rational and exercise his power in harmony with reason, he would cease to be almighty. But so soon as God is recognized as absolute Reason, then the universe must be acknowledged as a scientifically ordered system, there must be a real relation of means to ends, effects must be commensurate with the agencies causing them, everything must be subject to law. And when rational persons appear, a moral system comes into existence in which must be moral law sanctioned by penalty, probation, discipline, education, progressive development, conflict, temptation, struggle with difficulties, the risk of failure. The fundamental fact as to the universe is that from centre to circumference it and all creatures in it are bound under law, the eternal and unchanging law of the absolute Reason.

Here, then, is a third reality, the most fundamental of all, which completely dissolves the objector's dilemma. The reason why God does as he does, and not otherwise, in the prevention of sin is not necessarily either a defect of power or a defect of benevolence. It may be an unchangeable truth or law of reason which would be disregarded, an essential element in some rational ideal of perfection or good which would fail, if God should do otherwise than he does. The moment we know that God obeys the eternal laws and is realizing the ends of reason, the dilemma is dissolved.

James Mill used to say: "Think of a God who would make a hell." Here is the bald conception of God as the Lawless One, arbitrarily making a hell and forcibly putting his creatures into it. This conception is utterly foreign to theism, and much more to Christianity. God does not make hell any more than he makes sin. The persons who refuse to conform to the law of love make both sin and hell. God has constituted the universe according to the principles and laws of reason and for the real-

izing of its ideals. He has constituted rational creatures in a moral system, to be subject to his law of love, to be brought to know him, to be trained and disciplined into his likeness, and thus as always dependent on him to be the recipients of his love, and blessed therein. Sinners repudiate their dependence as creatures, set up for themselves in self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying; they refuse obedience to the law of love, they shut their souls against the reception of God's quickening and nourishing grace, they isolate themselves in selfishness. But the universe being constituted under the law of love, there is in it no place nor time when any person who wilfully separates himself from God and isolates himself in self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying, can be blessed. The law of love is not a word issuing on the breath. It is eternal in the constitution of God, the absolute Reason; it is the constitution of the universe and the most real and fundamental thing in it; it is itself the consuming fire of hell to those who isolate themselves from God and man in selfishness. There is no blessedness to any person in the universe except in the life of trust in God and of love to God and man.

It is essential to any moral system that it must consist of finite personal beings who are rational and free; that every such finite being must develop and confirm his own character by his own free action, since a person cannot be created with a fully developed and perfected moral character; that, therefore, liability to sin must be inseparable from the system; that almighty power cannot change the choice of a free will. And if any do sin and live in selfishness instead of love it is essential in any moral system constituted in perfect wisdom and love that one so living must fail to attain well-being.

The objector fails also in another respect to establish a real dilemma. He recognizes in God's moral character benevolence only, entirely overlooking his righteousness. The objection, therefore, rests only on the quagmire of hedonistic ethics. So soon as we see that God is himself obedient to law, that he is a righteous God, the dilemma is dissolved. There is no dilemma between a defect of power and a defect of benevolence, because there is this third and great reality, the righteousness of God, in which may be sufficient reasons why he does as he does, and not otherwise, in the prevention of sin. The possibility of this may be illustrated

in the history of martyrdoms. In the persecutions under the Roman emperors, the Christian, by sprinkling a handful of incense on the altar, might have prevented his persecutors from committing a heinous crime. Why did he not prevent it? Not through any lack of good-will or of power to prevent it; but because in so doing he would himself have done an unrighteous act. He would have renounced God and set himself in disobedience to his law of love. And he would not have accomplished any good, but only evil; he would only have aided to perpetuate the corruption of heathenism and to hinder the coming in of the benign reign of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Good-will unregulated by righteousness in obedience to law must always defeat itself and bring in evil instead of good. God's action is always regulated by righteousness in obedience to law. Therefore there may be reasons of righteousness why God does as he does, and not otherwise, in the prevention of sin, without defect either of benevolence or power.

But we are not shut up to merely human action for illustration. Christ reveals the thought and heart and action of God, under human limitations and conditions. He came to save men from sin, to bring them back to obedience to the law of love. He was rejected and crucified. The greatest of crimes was about to be committed. Why did not Christ prevent it? His tears over Jerusalem show that it was not the lack of compassion and good-will. The whole narrative shows that it was not the lack of power. The Jews were expecting their Messiah. They would have received him gladly as the Messiah, would have sustained him enthusiastically with arms and treasure, if he had conformed to their wish for a Messiah using his supernatural power as a conquering king extending by force his reign over the world. In the wilderness at the beginning of his presentation of himself as the Messiah, he was tempted to adopt this method. On the cross they tempted him again: "If he is the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him." Why did he not do so and prevent their committing the greatest of sins? Because he came, obeying the universal law of love, to save men from their disobedience to it and to bring them back into harmony with it and with God in the life of love; because he came to establish the reign of spiritual influences instead of

the reign of physical force with its selfish ambition, its rapacity, oppression, violence, and blood. If Christ had yielded to the wishes of the Jews in order to prevent their crime, he would himself have repudiated and dishonored the law of self-sacrificing love which he came to assert, vindicate, and maintain; would have crushed all hope of the reign of spiritual influence in truth and love instead of physical force used in self-aggrandizement, and would have given up the world to the hopeless reign of the sensual instead of the spiritual, of selfishness instead of self-sacrificing love, of the earthly, sensual, and devilish instead of the divine. He would never have revealed those fundamental realities in the constitution of the universe, that the desire to promote happiness unregulated by righteousness causes evil, and not good; that, instead of its being true that might makes right, the contrary is true that right makes might; that he who is greatest is he who serves in self-sacrificing love; and that, amid the temptations and conflicts of the world lying in wickedness, he who findeth his life shall lose it and he who loseth his life shall find it. Here is God's own theodicy, his revelation, in redeeming man from sin, of the universality, supremacy and inviolable authority of the law of self-sacrificing love, and of his own righteousness in obeying this law in all his action in reference to sin. Thus he reveals to us that there are reasons in his own righteousness, in his own conformity with the eternal law of love, why he does as he does, and not more or otherwise, in the prevention of sin and the redemption of sinners from it.

The dilemma of the skeptic being now dissolved, the objection is nullified and we come to the following conclusions.

In the perfection of God's reason and the invariable conformity of his action with it in perfect righteousness, there may be reasons why God does as he does, and not more or otherwise, in the prevention of sin and in bringing sinners from sin to the life of love. This the skeptic cannot deny, unless in omniscience he knows all which God knows, and thus sees that there is no reason justifying God in his action or in refraining from acting. And it is not necessary for us to know and define in detail what the reasons are. The dilemma is dissolved and the objection nullified when it is shown that there may be reasons other than defect of power or benevolence. This objection being set aside, the evidence that God is love, already adduced, remains in full force. There-

fore there not only may be, but there certainly are, reasons in God's wisdom and righteousness why he does as he does, and not otherwise. Here again it is not necessary to be able to say in detail what the reasons of God's action are. We know that the judge of all the earth does right, whether we can fathom all the reasons of his action or not.

We reach this theological position: For the prevention of sin and the deliverance of sinners from it God does all which perfect wisdom and love require or permit. He does all that infinite wisdom and love require; he refrains from doing more or otherwise, not from defect of power or benevolence, but only because wisdom and love do not permit.

2. This part of theodicy is commonly confused through failing to ascertain with precision what the question is. The following explanations are therefore necessary.

The question is not, how the existence of sin is accounted for. That is an entirely different question and is easily answered. It is accounted for as the act of a finite free agent. A free will cannot be determined by force, but only by influence adapted to a rational free will. The finite person forms his character by his own free action; in his constitution as finite he is accessible to temptation, and is thus under probation. He is, therefore, liable to sin. Here is the possibility of sin. And when we find it existing, its existence is accounted for by the fact that some free agents in the exercise of their free will have sinned.

The question is not, why the man sinned. It may be said it was because he was tempted. "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed" (James i. 14). But no temptation compels the will. The fact is accounted for by man's free will. But the act cannot be justified before the tribunal of reason, because it is of the essence of sin that it is a choice of the will in direct opposition to reason. It is always foolishness as well as wickedness. It is in its essence unreasonable. It must be forever impossible to give an explanation satisfactory to reason, why the man sinned. This, however, is no answer to the question of theodicy now before us, though sometimes presented as such, and even by so great a man as Neander. The question is not, Why does man sin? but, Why does not God do more, or otherwise, to prevent his sinning?

The question is not, why God does not interpose to prevent

sin. This implies in the very statement of the question that God does not interpose to prevent it. But in fact all God's action is in opposition to sin and for its prevention. All his action, being in harmony with the truths and laws of reason and thus for the realization of perfection and good, is the expression of perfect wisdom and love. Therefore the moral influence going forth from all his action is in support of the law of love and in opposition to the commission of sin.

This statement of the question also assumes that almighty power can prevent free agents from sinning, and that, therefore, the existence of sin is proof that God does nothing to prevent it. This assumption rests on the error that a free will can be determined by almightiness. But a free will can be determined only by itself in its own free choice or volition. It cannot be determined by force; it can be moved from without only by moral influence. A person's environment may excite in him constitutional motives to action, but it cannot determine his will. That determination must be his own free act. Hence this statement of the question tacitly assumes that the truths and laws of reason are not universal and supreme, and that the universe is not ultimately grounded in reason. Thus it falls back on the old error that the universe is grounded in and controlled by arbitrary and capricious almightiness. It involves the nugatory attempt to retain the conception of a moral system in which arbitrary and resistless almightiness determines the wills of the free agents in the system. In other words, it involves the absurdity of a system of rational free agents under moral government which is at the same time a mechanism driven by force according to the laws of mechanics. Then the persons in the moral system are, as Spinoza called them, spiritual automata. Not a few would agree with Mr. Huxley in wishing to be made wise and righteous and blessed by a fiat of the almighty.[1] But the conception is absurd and its realization impossible. Moral character can be formed only by the person's own free moral action. Every person must determine his own character and destiny. If he is to attain wisdom and to realize the beauty and blessedness of the life of love, if he is to be developed to moral and spiritual perfection, to the highest possibilities of his being, it can only be by

[1] Spinoza, "De Intell. Emend." cap. xi. § 85; Huxley, "Lay Sermons," p. 373.

his own free and steadfast determination in harmony with reason, in obedience to the law of love, and under the probation and discipline of the moral system. Hence the will of man may "resist," "grieve," and "quench" the Spirit of God. Because it is of the essence of a free will that it can be determined only by itself under moral influences, it follows that it may resist any moral influence. Otherwise it would be the moral influence which determined it, and not the will itself, and we fall into that doctrine of necessity, denying all freedom of will, which is called determinism. Therefore, as Professor Forbes of Aberdeen says, "The creation of a free-will being is the endowment of a creature with a power that may form a volition contrary to God's holy will, and may, by its own free act, break off from its normal condition of creaturely dependence on God's will, and resist, if it so determines, every effort of God for its recovery and reunion with him." [1]

The question is not why God permits sin. He does not permit it, but all his action exerts influence against it. Theologians have discussed the wisdom of God in the permission of sin. The phrase is false and misleading. We should rather speak of the non-prevention of sin.

The real question is: Why does God do all he does for the prevention of sin and evil, and not do more or otherwise? Why does he not do what would effectually prevent both? Man's sinning is unreasonable; it admits no justification to reason. But God's doing as he does, and not otherwise, for their prevention must be reasonable. There must be good reasons for it apparent to God; and if we knew all, we could declare them and justify his action and non-action to all reasonable persons.

3. The position of the skeptic rests on two other fundamental errors. One is the assumption that God is almighty power unregulated by reason, — an almighty caprice. With such a conception a theodicy is impossible. There would be no standards of truth and right, of perfection and worth, by which to judge God's action. There would be no difference between the reasonable and the absurd, the right and the wrong, the perfect and the imperfect, the wise and the foolish, and, consequently, none between the possible and the impossible. There would be no physical or spiritual system, no reasonable constitution of the

[1] "Predestination and Freewill," by John Forbes, D. D., LL.D., p. 12.

universe regulating action on and through all things in it, no connection of means and ends, no free will to be respected, no action under law, no moral government, no progressive development of the physical universe, no kingdom of God growing like the corn, by the agency of faithful men, under the quickening and guidance of the Spirit of God. Whatever the Almighty might wish to effect, however absurd it would be if the universe were rationally constituted, the Almighty has only to will and it comes to pass. It would not be even a paradise of fools, because there would be in it neither the wise nor fools.

The other error is that the search for evidence of God's love proceeds from the standpoint of Hedonism. One issue of this is that the investigation is merely empirical, an attempt to measure and weigh in all particular instances the quantity of enjoyment yielded by virtuous and vicious actions respectively. But man cannot in this way measure the enjoyment resulting from specific acts even as the results come under his observation, much less their issues in the endless future. Another issue of this Hedonistic method is that God's love is regarded as benevolence only, either excluding the righteousness altogether, or at least excluding it from love. The search in the universe for the revelation of such a God must be in vain, for such a God does not exist.

When the evidence is no longer obscured by these errors and is seen in the clear light and estimated by the unchanging norms or standards of reason, it will be found that the universe is so constituted that it is more advantageous to do right than to do wrong, to live the life of love than the life of selfishness; that the power that rules in it acts in accordance with the principles and laws of reason for the realization of rational perfection and good, and so acts in perfect knowledge and love, which constitute wisdom.

4. Though we may be unable to see the precise reasons why in any given case God does as he does, and not otherwise, yet it is involved in the necessary principles of reason that God as the absolute Being must be perfect in love and in every attribute of Spirit. It is a necessary principle of reason that some absolute Being must exist. An imperfect being cannot be the absolute and unconditioned. A being that is morally imperfect cannot be the absolute and unconditioned. A morally imperfect being is in conflict with himself; his will is in antagonism to his

reason. He chooses ends contradictory to reason, consequently external to and independent of himself. On these he expends his energy, and yet must fail of realizing them. Thus he has wants, — and wants which can never be satisfied in a universe scientifically intelligible and ordered under the supremacy of reason. Such a being cannot be self-existent and independent. His whole action would be foolish and wicked, in antagonism to truth and love. Such a being would be finite and imperfect. He could not be God. God would still be above him, the absolute Spirit, energizing in harmony with rational truth and law for the realization of all perfection and good. All the evidence that God is the absolute Spirit is equally evidence that he is perfect in love and in all wisdom.

That God is morally perfect is a fundamental postulate necessary to the trustworthiness of human reason and to the validity of the conclusions of human thought. If it is not true, we "are put to permanent intellectual confusion."

That reason, essentially like the reason of man, is universal and supreme is the fundamental postulate of all science. Otherwise all conclusions of science are invalidated and scientific knowledge is impossible.[1] What is thus true in the intellectual sphere is equally true in the ethical. It is the fundamental postulate of all ethics that reason, as practically regulative, is always and everywhere one and the same. If this is not true, if there is not one universal and supreme moral law, morality crumbles into chaos, knowledge in this great sphere of the practical regulation of conduct becomes impossible, human reason is discredited, and again we are put to permanent intellectual confusion. The formal principle of the law by which it is declared as law, the principle that a rational being ought to obey reason, rests on the postulate of one universal supreme Reason, the source of one universal supreme law obligatory on all rational beings. The real principle of the law rests on the same postulate. So soon as we know ourselves in a rational system, we know that no man liveth for himself alone or has a right to live for himself alone, but for all in their relations to one another in the system. Thus the law of universal love, the real principle or the law, rests on the postulate that God, the absolute Reason, is

[1] Phil. Basis of Theism, pp. 82, 312-314, 560-564; The Self-Revelation of God, pp. 45-47, 227, 256-266, 366-375; Chap. iv. § V., of this volume.

Love, and has constituted the universe under the law requiring universal love and bringing on all who disobey and live in selfishness the penalty of missing all true good. If we deny this, the law, both in its formal principle and its real, breaks down, moral distinctions disappear, the ethical principles and inferences of reason are invalidated, and human reason is found to be untrustworthy.

Thus the human reason, both in its speculative and its practical activity, finds itself face to face with God. When it looks in on itself in action, whether scientific or moral, it sees the universal Reason in the background. Paul says of man in his religious life: "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." [1] So, in the action of man's mind in science and in morals, the human reason, if the veil is taken from its face, sees in itself as in a mirror the image of God, the absolute Reason.

Mr. Spencer objects that the absolute Being, "the Power manifested through phenomena," cannot be subject to law, because it would imply "conditions apart from this Power" to which the Power would be subordinated. This rests on the assumption that the absolute is naked causal Power or energy, divested of reason and unregulated by it. Then, if the Power were subjected to law, the law would be external to and independent of the Power, and thus the Power would be conditioned and dependent. It is the old error that the absolute is an almighty caprice. The objection is of no force against the theistic conception of God, the absolute Spirit, in whom, as perfect Reason, the law is eternal; and whose will is in harmony with it in his own eternal free choice. Against this true conception of God the objection resolves itself into the absurdity that if God is autonomic, if he is enlightened by reason and knows what is true and right and perfect and good, he cannot be free. Whereas this enlightenment by reason is the essential constituent of all moral freedom of will.

Mr. Spencer argues, further, that the absolute Being cannot be subject to law because "right and wrong as conceived by us can exist only in relation to the actions of creatures capable of pleasures and pains; seeing that analysis carries us back to pleasures and pains as the elements out of which the conceptions

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

are formed." But this objection merely demonstrates that hedonism, on which Mr. Spencer founds his ethics, is an insufficient basis for a moral system.

He argues further, that "to ascribe rightness to the acts of the Power manifested through phenomena, is to assume the possibility that wrong acts may be committed by this Power."[1] If we regard God merely as the Almighty, he has power to do wrong, if he should so will. Free will implies power to do wrong or to do right. But God is not mere almighty power. He is the absolute Reason acting according to his own eternal self-determination in universal good-will exercised in harmony with the eternal truths and laws of Reason. Otherwise he could not be God the absolute and perfect Spirit. "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18). But that which makes it impossible for God to do wrong is not lack of power, but his eternal free self-determination in love in accordance with the principles and laws of reason. The fact that this determination is eternal as character does not make it less free. Analogous is fixedness of character in man through continued self-determination in love and perpetuated in the life everlasting. Spencer's objection rests on the error that man is free only so long as he feels the law as a "code of restraints;" that, therefore, "the ideal man among ideal men," who no longer is tempted by any impulse to any act causing pain to others, is no longer subject to law. But the law of God is not primarily a code of restraints, but the requirement of love. When a man is perfect in obedience, then love inspires all his actions, he no longer falls back on the "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" of the law; love gets the start of the sense of duty; it brings in moral spontaneity and, as the dominating motive, sweeps all impulses and desires along with it. But the man is not exempt from the law, he is perfectly obeying it. Love in this spontaneity and fulness is what the law requires, the end which it aims to attain; in all its commands and prohibitions the law is "our schoolmaster" to lead us to this freedom of love. This law of love is eternal in the absolute Reason; it is revealed in the constitution of the universe and attested in the reason and conscience of man. God in his eternal love is in voluntary harmony with this eternal and all-constitutive law, and all his action in creation, providence, and moral government, as well as in

[1] The Data of Ethics, chap. xv. § 99, chap. xvi. § 110, pp. 258, 286.

redemption, is in free and willing obedience to this law and a continual revelation and declaration of its universal and inviolable authority. The fact that God does not feel it as a code of restrictions does not prove that he is not under law freely acting in conformity with it in love, but proves, on the contrary, the perfection of his willing conformity with it. The objection implies that moral freedom is possible only in entire indifference; and that character, as it becomes formed, is incompatible with freedom; a person perfected in love to God and man would no longer be a free and responsible moral agent.

These errors are of frequent occurrence both in ethics and in theology. The error is deeply rooted, that all obedience to law involves struggle and conflict, that God is not subject to law, and that law and love are in antagonism. There is a strange forgetfulness of the facts that all which the law requires is love, that "the end of the law for righteousness" is to bring men to perfect obedience of the law of love, that the end of Christ's redemptive work is to accomplish the end of the law by bringing men away from selfishness and sin into perfect conformity with the law, and that, in the complete love which is perfect obedience to the law, the law is found to be "the perfect law," "the law of liberty."

A prominent evangelical newspaper, in a recent article, comes to the conclusion "that there are no duties owed by God to man." Mr. Spencer holds the same position; and both are open to the same philosophical objections. It is a position far removed from the conception of God as revealed in the Bible. Abraham appealed to God's obligation to deal with men in righteousness: "To slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Paul argues that if God should disregard the obligation in righteousness to punish the wicked, he could not be the righteous judge of the world. God himself again and again appeals to the reasonable judgment of men on the rectitude of his dealings with them: "O, house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"[1]

II. Sorrow and Suffering. — We have now ascertained the fundamental ground of theodicy in the fact that God is the abso-

[1] Gen. xviii. 25; Rom. iii. 5, 6; Ezek. xviii. 25–29.

lute Reason, and that the exercise of his power is regulated by the eternal principles and laws of reason for the realization of its eternal ideal of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe. His power is thus regulated in the double significance already explained, that God's power, though almighty, cannot give reality to what is absurd, and, according to his eternal free choice to act in harmony with reason in love, he will not do anything which is unreasonable and wrong. We proceed to consider the particular form of the objection as founded on the privation of good and the existence of positive pain, sorrow, and suffering. This objection is sufficiently answered when we show that there may be reasons known to God why he does not do more or otherwise in conferring good and preventing suffering. But even within our limited sphere of knowledge we see some reasons why privation of good and the suffering of pain and sorrow may exist under the wise and loving government of God. Some of these we may without unwarranted presumption ascertain and point out.[1]

1. Susceptibility to privation of good, to suffering and sorrow, is essential to the existence of a moral system consisting of finite persons under the government of God.

A finite being, as limited, is destitute of good which it is conceivable a being of greater capacity might enjoy. By good I mean here the good which a finite being might attain by right action and development within the limits of its capacities and in accordance with its constitution.

The susceptibility to privation of good and to suffering and sorrow is essential to the existence and maintenance of moral law. It is essential to law that it be sanctioned by the punishment of transgressors. But a being not susceptible of suffering nor of the privation of good could not be punished for any transgression. God has so constituted the universe that a finite person in it can realize good only in conformity with its fundamental law of love, and that a life of selfishness can issue only in the loss of all that is really good and in the suffering of evil. But such a constitution of the universe is possible only if finite persons exist capable of joy or sorrow, and so capable of experien-

[1] See "The Self-Revelation of God," pp. 297–316, where I have considered some of these reasons. Without repeating what was there said, we may get further light from the higher point of view which we have now attained.

cing good or evil. The same is essential to the revelation of God's character in the universe. If God had constituted it so that no evil could be incurred by sin and no blessedness attained by the life of righteousness and good-will, he would not have revealed any eternal and inviolable law of love sustained and enforced by all the energies of his own will acting always in harmony with reason. He would have revealed himself as entirely indifferent to moral character and to the distinction of right and wrong.

It must be noticed here that it is only the susceptibility of finite persons to joy and sorrow which is essential to a moral system, not the actual experience of loss and suffering. Persons who always are perfectly conformed to the law of love are always blessed in their love in harmony with the law. Only it must always remain true that if any one of them should cease to love he would lose his blessedness and suffer evil. Thus God, eternally in harmony with the law of reason, is eternally blessed in his love.

The susceptibility of finite persons to suffering and loss is essential also to the possibility of probation, and of discipline, education, and development, in a moral system. These presuppose finite persons subject to various motives, susceptible of enjoyment and suffering from many and even incompatible sources, capable of discriminating joys and their sources as worthy or unworthy, subject to temptation, yet able to resist it. In thus meeting the various influences of his environment, man is on probation; as he determines his action, either in harmony with the law or in transgression of it, he forms his character, either right or wrong. And by acting right under all these influences he is disciplined, educated, and developed in right character, and advances toward the realization of the highest possibilities of his rational and spiritual being. But without susceptibility to pleasure and pain, to joy and sorrow, this probation, discipline, and development would be impossible. It is as absurd to suppose that God might create a person with a perfectly holy character, as to suppose his creating one a hundred years old. Moral character is possible in a finite person only as he by his own free action determines, develops, and confirms it.

Thus human life is a ladder, and its events, opportunities, and exigencies are the rounds by which the man may climb from

earth to heaven, at every step lifting himself nearer to God. And it necessarily involves the risk that, yielding to temptation, he lose his hold and fall to earth again. And even the fall becomes an occasion of calling forth in others the service of love, bringing the fallen one to Christ to heal his wounds and set him forth again on the ascent to the divine from which he fell. Every stone which falls imparts force enough to throw it back to the height from which it fell. And there is a sort of analogy in this in the fall of men into suffering and sin, as calling forth the loving service of others and so becoming the occasion of their discipline and development in the spiritual life of love. The conflict of good with injustice and oppression, the effort to rescue men from sensuality, ignorance, and vice, the labor to reform abuses, the seeking the lost and sinful wherever they may be, to bring them to Christ, are a continual disciplining, strengthening, and developing of Christ's people into the likeness and power of Christ.

2. The investigation of the constitution and course of the universe discloses many lines of evidence that it is constituted and goes on in accordance with the law of love.

History proves not merely that knowledge and intellectual culture and development are power, but also that love and the moral and religious culture and development involved in it are power. Mr. Spencer expects that, according to the law of the survival of the fittest, it is they who live lives of love who are destined to be the survivors of all and to fill and possess the earth. And a survey of the ages shows that the influence of men of righteousness and good-will survives and widens, while that of the wicked decays. Paul was a prisoner chained, and Nero the emperor of the western world. Luther was a monk, and Charles V. was the emperor of half of Europe. Who in their day would have thought that the prisoner and the monk were mightier than the emperors? But what has been the influence of Nero and Charles during all succeeding ages, compared with the influence of Luther and of Paul? Shakespeare took but a superficial view of history when he said:

> "The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

Maggots breeding in corruption are more prolific than men; but we do not expect them to prevail over men. The great powers

of the universe are the powers of life and growth, not the powers of corruption and decay. Error and vice contain in themselves elements of decay. Truth and love are eternal. This truth the common-sense of mankind has embodied in its proverbs: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church;" "The martyrs of one age are the heroes of the next." All ingenuous spirits assent with enthusiasm to the words of Bryant:

> "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
> The eternal years of God are hers;
> But error, wounded, writhes in pain
> And dies among his worshipers."

We must notice also the capacity of righteousness and good-will, if universally prevalent, to make the world blessed. On the contrary, the universal prevalence of the greed of selfishness, under the law that might makes right, would make the world uninhabitable. This shows that God has so constituted the universe that real good having true worth, as estimated by the standards of reason, is attainable only by righteousness and good-will, and that love thus illuminated by reason and in harmony with it is the only wisdom.[1]

3. In the constitution of man there is further evidence that God is love. There is no joy purer or more complete than that which suffuses the soul in the consciousness of doing right, and all the more when it has cost struggle and self-denial. And there is no more crushing anguish than remorse in the consciousness of wrong-doing and guilt, gnawing the soul in self-condemnation and self-reproach in which the sinner judges himself as shut out from good and deserving only evil. As Daniel Webster says of the criminal in his consciousness of guilt: "He feels it beating at his heart, rising to his throat, and demanding disclosure. He thinks the whole world sees it in his face, reads it in his eyes, and almost hears its workings in the very silence of his thoughts."[2] It sometimes drives the criminal to suicide or self-surrender to the officers of justice, accepting punishment itself as a sort of satisfaction. It sometimes gives objective reality to its own expectation of retribution; and he sees all things frowning on him as if charging him with his crime, like the parricide mentioned by Plutarch, who destroyed a nest of birds because by their chatter-

[1] See "Philosophical Basis of Theism," pp. 212–224.

[2] Works, vol. vi. p. 54.

ing they reproached him for the murder; or he sees the ghost of his victim: —

> "The fiends in his own bosom people air
> With kindred fiends that drive him to despair."

Here are the natural sanctions of virtue and proof of the moral character of God who gave the law and ordained its sanctions.

We find also an intrinsic blessedness in the exercise of benevolence, in magnanimity and honor, in protecting the weak in their rights, in doing justly to all, in the sincerity which has nothing to hide. On the other hand, in malevolence, in the greed of covetousness, in intrigue and dishonesty, and many other vices, there are an uneasiness and restlessness, a rasping of the spirit, a carking anxiety, which make their very exercise painful and corroding, a rust eating the soul.

Thus in man's emotional as well as in his rational constitution we find evidence that God is love, and that his law of love is universal, supreme, and inviolable. It has been objected that God may be a wicked being who has given us this constitution on purpose to deceive us. Various answers have been given. It has been said that God would have no motive to deceive us. Thomas Chubb says that God could not be so mean as to do it.[1] All such answers present glimpses of the fundamental truth which underlies them all: that the existence of God, the absolute Reason, energizing in obedience to the principles and laws of reason for the realization of its ideals of perfection and good, is the fundamental postulate of all human science, whether speculative or practical, whether of the physical universe or of the distinctions of right and wrong. If this is not true, then human reason is untrustworthy, scientific knowledge is impossible, and moral law, obligations and distinctions, disappear. And it is equally true that if the law of love is not the supreme and universal law, eternal in the absolute Reason, and if God's own action is not always in obedience to it in love, then God is not the absolute Being, but is himself conditioned and imperfect.

4. It is objected that the blessings of life are distributed with

[1] "To be arbitrary in his government and thereby to act the part of a weak and childish, or of an evil and vicious, being, is so mean and disreputable that God, upon that account, will be at the farthest remove from it." — Thomas Chubb, "A Collection of Tracts on Various Subjects" [A Vindication of God's Moral Character], p. 253. Ed. London, 1730.

no regard to moral character; that the wicked are often in prosperity and the righteous in adversity.

The first answer is, that the allegation of the objection is true in reference to wealth, official position, the applause of the world, and similar acquisitions, which do not constitute spiritual well-being. God is not so impoverished that he must reward those who live lives of universal love only with gifts like these which perish in the using.

> "Wealth on the vilest often is bestowed
> To show its vileness in the sight of God."

It would not have been worth while for God to come in Christ to men, only to teach them how to provide for their earthly comfort. It would be the revelation that man's highest good consists in his condition and surrounding, in what he gets, not in what he is and does; that man's highest good is to attain the means of luxurious living; that God has come from heaven to earth to intensify man's eagerness to get wealth and worldly ease and honor; that man is of the earth, earthly, with no relation to God and the spiritual system, and no outlook to the higher and spiritual life. To those who serve God and their fellow-men in love, God gives "the durable riches and righteousness." He opens to them their relation to the spiritual system, the possibility of communing with him, becoming like him, and being blessed in him. He secures to them the perfection of their being, harmony with themselves, with the constitution and course of the universe, with the spiritual system, and with God. Thus he insures that all things, however seemingly adverse, shall work together for their good. So life becomes the continual unfolding to them of our Saviour's secret: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it."[1]

Here we have found the deeper principle on which the answer to the objection rests. Man's true good consists in the perfection of his being, in his consequent harmony with himself, with the universe and with God, and the blessedness ensuing. Then, in the life and service of love, man is continually attaining his true well-being. Character is confirmed by action in accordance with it. Therefore every act of love purifies and strengthens the love, develops the man toward the perfection of his being, and confirms him in his harmony with God and the universe, and in the

[1] Matth. x. 39.

enjoyment resulting. Every selfish act strengthens the man's selfishness, disorders and corrupts his being, widens his alienation from God and all who love God and men, and sinks him deeper in all evil.

Thus in this life every right act receives at once and inevitably its reward in insuring to man his true and essential good; and every wrong act, every wrong feeling indulged, every hour of selfish living, receives at once and inevitably its due punishment in confirming the person in his selfish character, making him more and more insensible to the higher and spiritual motives and to God's gracious influences and drawing, and at last sinking him irrevocably in the bottomless pit of his own selfishness and alienation from God and from all true good.

5. Man's dissatisfaction with his present condition is incidental to his being constituted for the progressive realization of a higher ideal. We have seen that God's revelation of himself must be made, if at all, in a finite universe, and realized progressively. Hence at any point of time God's archetypal idea cannot be completely realized, but is ever pointing forwards to something higher in the future. Any objection to God's goodness founded on this incompleteness is futile, because this incompleteness is itself incidental to progress in the realization of the ideal, and the resources of the absolute Being can never be exhausted. For example, if it is asked why God did not come in Christ to redeem men from sin a thousand years earlier, the question is futile; for, whenever he might have come, the question would be equally pertinent, Why did he not come before? If he had come when the first rational man appeared, the question would still be, Why was not man brought into being earlier, and why did not Christ come immediately on the appearance of the first man? God has been realizing his archetypal ideal through countless æons in countless worlds, and doubtless in the evolution of innumerable systems in space and time. At any point of time or space it is idle to object that God cannot be all-wise, almighty, and all-good, because the universe is not finished to perfection, and we can conceive of something higher still to be attained. This objection carries us back to the Epicurean conception that God created the universe and finished it, and ever since has been an idle spectator of its ongoing.

The same principle applies to the rational individual. God has

constituted every rational person immortal. God is seeking to realize in every such person the ideal of perfection in endless development in knowledge, power, and blessedness. Therefore man's very dissatisfaction with his present condition, with outward acquisitions, with the gratification of selfish desires, his longing for what is higher and better, his "noble discontent," is incidental to his being constituted for the realization of a higher ideal. It reveals him as too great for his present physical environment, ever reaching out to transcend it. It shows him to be also conscious, however dimly, of his divine and spiritual environment. If he is not seeking to realize his spiritual development, his incapacity to be satisfied with sensual joys and earthly acquisitions attests that he has missed the higher spiritual development in union with God for which he was designed.

From this point of view death itself, which casts its gloom over human life, is but a necessary epoch in the development of man to his higher destiny.

We notice also that a large part of the privation of good and of the suffering and sorrow incident to humanity results from man's own sin. If all men had always lived in conformity with the laws of their being, physical, intellectual, moral, æsthetic, and religious, the greater part, if not all, of human suffering would have been avoided. And death itself would have been an epoch in man's normal growth and development, like the opening of the bud into the flower, or, as Paul illustrated it, like the shooting of the living germ from the ripened seed.

Since man has sinned, God in Christ has come into humanity reconciling the world unto himself. He has established his kingdom, and is progressively developing it as a living growth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv. 28).

Thus, both for the individual and for society, we may accept the privation and suffering of the present time, either as incidental to man's implicit consciousness of his higher destiny and as necessary to his development and education for the realization of the highest possibilities of his being, or as the result of human sin vitiating not only the individual sinner but also the race connection. And we may rest in peace, having entire and well-founded confidence in the good-will and righteousness of God in respect to all his action or non-action, the reasons for which we do not

understand, and in the assurance of the progress of the kingdom of God, and of every individual who trusts and serves him, to the realization of the highest ideal of perfection and well-being, in glory, honor, and immortality, in the life eternal. In this faith we may adopt the words of Browning: —

> My own hope is, a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
> That, after last, returns the first,
> Though a wide compass round be fetched;
> That what began best, can't end worst;
> Nor what God blessed once, prove accursed.
>
> *Apparent Failure.*

III. Sin. — We proceed to consider the form of the objection as founded on the fact of sin. Theodicy, or the justification of God in the non-prevention of sin, does not require us to point out the specific reasons why God does as he does, and not otherwise, in respect to it. In all ages of civilization the question as to the origin of evil and the reasons of God's action pertaining to it has oppressed the human mind. In one of the letters attributed to Plato, the writer speaks of this question as "the travail [ὠδίς] of the soul, from which, if it cannot be delivered, it can never reach real truth."[1] But we are delivered from this travail, we rest in mental peace, since we have ascertained that God is the all-perfect Spirit, and that the reasons of his doing or his not doing, whether we know them specifically or not, are reasons of perfect wisdom and love, reasons founded always on his perfection, never on any defect. But here, also, as to the origin of sin, as in respect to privation and suffering, we may see, even within our limited sphere of knowledge, some specific reasons why God does not do more or otherwise in the prevention of sin.

1. The principles established and the reasons of God's action set forth in the first and second sections of this chapter are applicable in answer to the objection as founded on the fact of sin. If a moral system exists, it must consist of finite, and therefore fallible persons; each person must be gradually developed and form a character; the revelation of God to men must be progressive, adapted to the character, attainments and development of the finite persons; the kingdom which God is developing on

[1] Epistle ii. to Dionysius.

earth must be progressive. The possibility of sin and the liability to commit it are therefore inseparable from a moral system. Here, however, observe that sin as a fact is not necessary in a moral system, because it is conceivable that all rational persons in forming character may always choose right. But the possibility of sinning, and the consequent liability to sin in finite persons is inseparable from the moral system. Almighty power cannot create a moral system of rational persons, each of whom must develop himself and form and confirm a character by his own free action, without the possibility of their sinning and their consequent liability to sin.

The fundamental reason, by which the objection as founded on the fact of sin is invalidated, is the fact that all rational beings created by God in a moral system are free agents and finite. It is impossible for God by an act of almighty power to determine the free choice of a rational free agent. A free choice is in its essence a person's free self-determination. If determined by another it would no longer be the person's self-determination. It is no more possible for God by resistless almighty force to determine a man's free self-determination than it is possible for him to create a circle with the radii unequal. Each is absurd, and no power can give reality to that which is absurd. All rational free agents except God ar also finite. Therefore they must be educated and developed, must form moral characters, and are liable to err and to sin. Thus, within our own sphere of knowledge, we can see adequate reasons why God does as he does, and not otherwise, in the non-prevention of sin. We can rest, therefore, in the position that God in universal good-will does all that the principles, laws, and ideals of reason permit or require for the preventing of sin, and that evermore he "will wait that he may be gracious" (Isa. xxx. 18); will use every divine influence available to induce sinners to return to him in penitential trust and loving service, and will rejoice to welcome and receive to favor every one who will thus return to him. It is only when he sees that the sinner is so confirmed in sinful character by his own persistence in sin as to be beyond the reach of all possible moral influence to induce him to repent, that God may be said to give him over to his own heart's lusts, and the Holy Spirit is said to be grieved and quenched. But even then God's good-will remains unchanged; he would draw the sinner to himself if he could be

induced to return, and then would gladly welcome him as a prodigal son returning penitent to his father's house.

2. I proceed to consider some of the false historical theories proposed in answer to the question, What is the reason in God's wisdom and love why he does as he does, and not otherwise, in the prevention of sin? It must be constantly borne in mind that the failure of any theory to give a satisfactory answer to this specific question is not, as often supposed, a failure of our theodicy. On the contrary, as we have seen, the question at this stage assumes the general answer already found, that the specific reasons, whatever they may be, are reasons of wisdom and love. It must also be premised that any theory, purporting to give all the specific reasons of wisdom and love for all God's acting and non-acting, presupposes knowledge of all the details of his archetypal plan and its progressive realization, which, as being omniscience, no finite mind can have. "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?"[1] Speculations of this kind, instead of giving light, have usually resulted only in making the darkness visible.

One theory is that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. The refutation of this theory is decisive and obvious. It implies that sin, as the necessary means of the greatest good, is grounded in reason and essential in the constitution of the universe. Then sin ceases to be sin because it is accordant with the principles of reason and the constitution of the universe; it ceases to be evil because it is necessary to the good; and it ceases to be conditioned, temporal and finite, as originated and perpetuated by the action of finite persons, and, like love itself, has its basis in the principles of reason which are eternal in God. Such optimism annuls the essential distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil. On the contrary, finite creatures, endowed with rational free will, are, in the exercise of their free agency, the responsible authors of sin. It is not accordant with any principle or law of reason, but is in its essence the renunciation of dependence on God and of allegiance to him; it is the act of a creature of God putting himself in antagonism to all truth and law, to all perfection and good, and to the constitution of the universe. Therefore the perfection of the constitution of

[1] Isaiah xl. 14.

the universe and of the laws of the moral system is independent of the fact of sin and is not impaired by it. Sin exists, not as essential in the constitution of things and the requirements of the eternal and universal Reason, but in direct antagonism to them. Therefore it is temporal and finite, not eternal and universal; an evil to be resisted by all the wise and righteous, to be overpowered by love, or, if persistent in opposition to love, to be restrained and frustrated by righteous penalty.

Sin, therefore, is neither essential nor relative good. In itself and in all its distinctive effects it is evil and only evil continually. It is the only essential evil in the universe. But this evil is not an abstraction. It is concrete, living, and energizing, in the character and action of rational persons. It is energizing in contradiction of the truth and in violation and defiance of the law of reason, in antagonism to the realization of all rational ideals of perfection and good, in antagonism to the highest interests of man, and to the realization of the great ends of his education, discipline, and development in the moral system. Sin is never better for the universe than love would be in its place. Therefore we must look the fact in the face, that there is essential evil in the universe; that there are in it those who are using their high powers as personal beings in doing evil. God does not bring it in, but the sinners themselves. We must recognize the fact that God's whole action is in opposition to sin; we must recognize also the aspect of the life of a righteous man, now so much forgotten, that it is a warfare against sin both in himself and in all others, that he is to be a worker together with God to save men from the power of sin, from all injustice, falsity, covetousness, sensuality, and to bring the world back under the reign and into the kingdom of God. The optimism which overlooks this fact is false philosophy and of immoral and dangerous tendency. When an event occurs like the assassination of Lincoln, or of Garfield, or of William of Orange, or the Bartholomew Massacre, it is false and dangerous to assume that God ordained it as the necessary means of good, and that it will necessarily promote the well-being of mankind. Such an event is evil and diminishes the sum total of human happiness. It hinders the progress of society and the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth. All its distinctive effects are evil.

But while man's sinning is never for the good of the universe,

all God's doing, or not doing, in reference to sin, either before or after it is committed, is in perfect wisdom and love. Therefore it is good in itself; and in its distinctive effects and influences it is productive of good and never of evil. God's action in reference to sin is better for the universe than any different action would be in its place. When man does wrong God does right; when man does evil God does good. Whatever good is done on occasion of sin is not an effect of the sin, but of the action of God, or of good persons working with God on occasion of the sin. It is only in this sense that God brings good out of evil. Though God has wrought redemption in Christ, the world is not better nor heaven brighter and more blessed because man sinned than they would have been if all men had always lived lives of perfect love. There is, indeed, a peculiar joy of the sinner, renewed and accepted as a child of God, which can never be experienced by one who never sinned. But it is unreasonable to suppose that there is a greater amount of happiness and a higher blessedness and well-being than there would have been if all men had realized their full and perfect development without sin. It cannot be supposed that, if man had never sinned, God would have sought him with less love or come into less intimate union with him than he now does in Christ and the Holy Spirit with sinners who return to him. There is also the dead loss of all the time spent in selfishness; there is all the evil then done which will never be undone even by redemption. For action done can never be recalled from the past and undone. There is also all the influence which a wicked man started before his conversion to Christ, which is not stopped at his conversion, but continues to spread like circles in the water starting from a falling stone. And in whatever way God would have come into unity with man if he had not sinned, it would not have been by Gethsemane and the cross. These and all the unknown anguish of the Man of sorrows were on account of man's sin. This is attested in the peculiar guilt felt in Christian experience and expressed in Christian worship:

> "Where could my trembling soul be hid?
> For I the Lord had slain."

The Missale Romanum, in the Liturgy of the Easter Vigil, has the following: "O surely necessary sin of Adam, which has been

blotted out by the death of Christ. O blessed guilt, which has deserved to have such and so great a redeemer."[1] This continued long in the theology and worship of the church. But it is a false and dangerous conception, resting on the error that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. The error is flagrant in the words themselves. They ascribe to sin and guilt the praise of man's redemption, and merit so great that they deserved to have the Son of God as the redeemer. There is indeed a joy peculiar to the forgiveness of sin. But, as K. I. Nitzsch illustrates it, the joy is not caused by the sin, but by the escape from it; as the joy peculiar to the recovery from disease is not caused by the disease, but by the escape from it. The joy is peculiar; but the man would have had more enjoyment if he had continued in uninterrupted health and had escaped the suffering and anxiety of his disease.

It is true that acquaintance with a great sinner awakens abhorrence, disgust and repugnance in one who is living the life of Christian love. Thus by contrast it occasions increased joy in his own higher life and intensifies his zeal to save sinners from their sins. But this is only in accordance with the principle that character is developed and confirmed by action and so the whole influence of the environment is ultimately changed into conformity with the character. In the life of love that which once attracted the person to sin, with temptation seemingly irresistible, becomes positively repulsive. In accordance with this principle, the Christian by his character in love determines the influence of his environment. Thus, little as he seemingly is in contrast with the universe, he attains the commanding position in which all things, the sins of other persons not excepted, work together for his good. The sins of others are not the cause, but only the occasion of his development in his action in reference to them. It is the person's own sin which is to him the essential evil, which cannot work for his good, and which can never be better for him than love would have been in its place. It is his own

[1] "O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est. O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem." It was versified by Bishop Ken:

"What Adam did amiss
Turns to our endless bliss;
O happy sin, which to atone
Drew filial God to leave his throne."

love to God and man, trusting in the gracious God, which makes the sins of others the occasion of Christian action and growth in love. And in the moral system as a whole, if none had ever sinned the love would have been all the more fully developed. Sin is the only essential evil. Sin can never be better for the moral system than love would have been in its stead.

Another form of false theodicy affirms that moral imperfection is implied in metaphysical imperfection. Metaphysical imperfection denotes merely the limitations and imperfection of the constitution of a man inherent in his finiteness. This theodicy is a mere play upon words, through the use of *imperfection* with two different applications. It implies that immaturity or constitutional limitation of a finite being is the same with moral imperfection, which is sin. The sufficient answer is that sin is always the self-determination of a rational being disobeying the law of love in the exercise of free will, and is totally different from immaturity, or constitutional limitation of any kind. Sin is character formed in the free choice of a rational free agent and manifested in voluntary action in accordance with and expressing the character. God accepts a man according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not. In educating and developing him God makes allowance for his constitutional limitations. He deals with him in his ignorance, weakness, and immaturity, with infinite tenderness and pity, with more than a mother's love for her child and willingness to excuse its infantile imperfection. God imputes constitutional defect and immaturity to no person as sin. The assertion that he does so imputes injustice to God, annuls the significance and enormity of sin as the essential evil, sunders moral character and responsibility from rational free will, and unsettles the foundation of the moral system and the moral government of God.

This confounding of sin with the metaphysical imperfection or constitutional limitation of a finite being, this playing on the different meanings of a word in the defence of this theory, have led to various false and even fantastic speculations respecting sin. It is said that evil cannot exist except as it attaches itself to the good, as rust can exist only as it attaches itself to a metal. Hence the conception of Satan as a being wholly sinful and evil is absurd. For existence is a good. So long, therefore, as Satan exists he is not wholly evil. Had he become wholly evil, the

evil that had attached itself to him would have destroyed all the good in him, therefore his existence, which is a good. So long as he exists he is in part good. When he becomes wholly evil he ceases to exist, and with him the evil which had consumed him ceases to exist.[1] And this paltering with the different meanings of a word is put forth as profound philosophy. A similar error lies at the root of those misty speculations which imply that a man does not become a personal spirit till he is renewed by the Holy Spirit; that without that renewal he gradually loses himself, and at last sinks out of being; that sin wears out the powers, and ultimately annihilates the man. These speculations confound moral character with the constitutional powers of a personal agent; they have no foundation in reason, nor in observed facts, nor in the Bible. The constitutional powers of man are developed by vigorous exercise in sin as really, though not as fully and harmoniously, as in righteousness. A prize-fighter strengthens his arm by exercise as really as a blacksmith. Bonaparte developed his great genius by the enterprises of his selfish ambition as really as Paul did by his enterprises of love. The Bible speaks of the depths of Satan as well as of the depths of God (Rev. ii. 24). Thus developing their physical and intellectual powers, sinners only become more powerful in doing evil.

Another theory is that sin is necessary to the discipline and development of free moral agents, and so to the perfection of their being and to the progress of society. We have seen that the finiteness and free agency of man involve the necessity of his forming and developing his moral character by his own free self-determination and his action accordant therewith; and that this process, through the limitations and imperfections inseparable from finiteness, involves liability to temptation and the possibility of sinning. The theory now to be considered goes much further, and insists that the person's own actual sin is a factor in his normal development. It is argued that what we call sin originates in the necessary contrasts of life. In nature all action is the struggle of opposing forces. So in the moral life evil is necessary to the activity of the good, and even to the knowledge of it. As there can be no light without shadow, so there can be no right

[1] See Julius Müller, "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," Transl., 3d edition, vol. i., pp. 305, 306.

without wrong, no good without evil. Without ignorance there could be no pleasure in knowledge and no incentive to seek it. "Goodness cannot take place without indigent objects for it to be exercised upon." [1] Heaven itself would be insipid and wearisome, without action or enjoyment, if there were no evil in it. Sin is necessary to the discipline and development of man. It is the great sanctifier of the human soul. It is "good in the making."

> "They say best men are moulded out of faults
> And, for the most, become much more the better
> For being a little bad."

It would follow that, whatever a man's crimes and the wickedness of his character, he is only passing through the processes necessary to his discipline and development to realize the perfection and highest blessedness of his being. And this R. W. Emerson explicitly asserts: "The divine effort is never relaxed; the carrion in the sun will convert itself into grass and flowers; and man, though in brothels or jails or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is true and good." [2] One error here is that the theory entirely overlooks the fact that man is a rational free agent. He is regarded as a sort of potentialized matter, and the development is of the nature of a physical process. Hence the theory entirely misconceives what sin is. And it involves the absurdity that this impersonal animal is, by a sort of physical process, developed into a rational, personal spirit.

If, however, the free personality of man is acknowledged, then the proposed process of discipline and development by sinning is nothing less than absurd. Rational free will, susceptibility to motives through innocent propensities, liability to temptation, and the consequent possibility of sin are essential to the development of the character of a finite person and to his progress to the perfection of his being. But the discipline and development are attained by regulating the impulses and desires, by resisting temptation, by standing fast in rectitude against all opposition to it and all enticements to wrong-doing. Thus, by an entirely innocent antagonism of the flesh and the spirit, the spiritual in man may have steadily prevailed, and the man may have advanced

[1] Thomas Chubb, "Collection of Tracts," p. 256.
[2] Representative Men, p. 133, Works, 1883.

through an endless gradation to higher and higher development. But the error in the theory is that it makes actual sin the necessary means of discipline and development. If a man rules over his body and his spirit, if he resists all temptation, if he lives the life of universal love, and always does right, he remains immature, weak and undeveloped, he does not attain a right moral character, and makes no progress toward the perfection of his being. But if he gives the rein to his appetites and desires, if he disregards the dictates of reason and conscience, if he lives a life of sensuality and self-indulgence, if he is supremely selfish and reckless of the rights of others, then he develops and purifies himself and realizes all the noblest ends of his being. A greater absurdity cannot be imagined. Yet this is propounded as the only basis of enlightened ethics.

If this theory is true, sin ceases to be sin and becomes a necessary but transient disease. It is like the measles. Every person is born with a constitutional liability to them; and this imperfection can be eliminated only by having the disease. Every parent rejoices when a child gets safely through, and can have the loathsome disease no more. So the Father in heaven watches tenderly over his suffering children through the terrible crises of wickedness and crime in the loathsome but inevitable disease of sin, and rejoices as one after another they get through it to suffer its attack no more. If this is so, then what we call sin is essential in the constitution of the universe, and demanded by the universal reason; it loses all sinfulness and guilt; it ceases to be evil and becomes good. It is good in the germ, good in the process of development into perfect blessedness. Then all distinction between right and wrong is annulled; there can be no free agency, no moral system, moral law, or moral government in the universe.[1]

[1] Dr. Frederic H. Hedge seems entirely to overlook the distinction between the two questions, What is the cause of the existence of sin? and Why does not God do more, or otherwise, than he does to prevent it? He seems not to recognize man's free agency at all, and to refer everything to the direct causative efficiency of God. As to the origin of evil, he says: "There is but one answer to this question. What love proposes and wisdom plans must needs be good. This fundamental truth of practical reason is the only solution of the problem. Such a being sees and knows only what is good. What we call evil, therefore, the evil of our own experience, when referred to its source, has precisely the same character with that which

From these vain speculations we come back to the fundamental position that the universe is the expression of the archetypal thought of the eternal Reason, and that in the eternal wisdom and love which that archetype expresses may be reasons why God does as he does, and not otherwise, in the prevention of sin. We come back on the eternal thought of God, that ultimate fact on which all sorrow of heart and all perplexity of intellect at last repose, that ultimate fact so touchingly recognized by Christ: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." There is sublimity in the words of Lord Bacon beginning the "Instauratio Magna," the great work which opened the new era in the scientific knowledge of the universe: "Franciscus de Verulamio sic cogitavit." But more sublime the *Sic Cogitavit* of God, the eternal thought of the absolute Reason, uttered in the divine and living Word that creates the universe.

3. These false theories are forms of a false and pernicious optimism. They deny the existence of any essential evil. Everything is either essential or relative good. They tend, therefore, to a superficial conception of sin as relative good, and a total failure to estimate aright its terrible character as wilful opposition to God, to reason, to all that is true, right, perfect, and good, and to the constitution and evolution of the universe — evil and only evil continuously in itself and in all its distinctive influences. Such optimism is often assumed as essential in theodicy; its subtle influence often colors religious thinking and enfeebles the preaching of the gospel. A sermon was recently preached before an association of ministers and churches on "The Usefulness of the Outbreaking Sins of Christians." This exemplifies the error already pointed out, that when a great crime has been committed

we call good. If God is good, and all that is proceeds from him, there is no evil. Suffering, distress, privation, woe of every kind; but no evil. All is good in its origin and purpose, and must eventually prove itself so to human experience. . . . To the question, then, how evil consists with the goodness of God, I answer flatly it does not consist with the goodness of God. One or the other of these conceptions must be abandoned. Either there is no God such as we figure him, or there is no evil. Pain and suffering in abundance, but no evil. For only that is really evil which is evil in its cause and in its effect, in its origin and end — evil in its issues, evil forevermore. Nothing in God's universe answers to that condition." ("Ways of the Spirit," Boston, 1877, pp. 243, 245.)

It would follow from this that there is no sin in the world, and that all which we call sin is not evil but good, and proceeds directly from God.

it is necessary for the justification of God to show that the crime is a means of good — that the world is better off for it. The necessary influence of this false optimism is to break down reverence for the authority and inviolability of law, to deaden the criminal's own sense of sin, to weaken public indignation against crime, to stupefy the common conscience, and to make it impossible to create a conviction of the true sinfulness, guilt, and enormity of sin, and of its true character as essential evil, evil in itself and in all its peculiar influence. It conduces to a moral education which legitimately issues in making a criminal a hero, the object of admiration rather than of indignation and abhorrence. John Bradford was one of the martyrs at Smithfield, "the first preacher of that wonderful age." When a young man, he was secretary to the paymaster of the army in France. Being gay, thoughtless, and extravagant, he appropriated some of the money intrusted to him. But being unable to bear the load of his guilt, he voluntarily made restitution and resigned. Through his whole life he was burdened with the sense of guilt on account of that fraud, and was often found weeping over his great sin. On one occasion, seeing a criminal led to execution at Tyburn, he exclaimed: "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford." This famous saying was not cant when Bradford uttered it, whatever it may have been in the frequent repetition of it since then. In our own time, outbreaking sins of professing Christians have not been wanting. It would be a healthful symptom if they were followed by a like lifelong contrition on the part of the transgressors, and if the public mind were pervaded by a commensurate estimate of sin as evil and only evil continually. But this cannot be expected so long as men are taught that every crime is a blessing to the world, that the commission of a crime does more good in the end than its omission, or even than a virtuous act in its stead would have done.

It is often said in a revival of religion that the openly wicked and ungodly are more likely to be awakened and converted than persons of moral lives who always have attended church and lived under the influence of the gospel. This error is due in part to the impression that a religious life can begin only in a moral convulsion after years of ungodliness. It is also contradicted by observed facts. Yet it is in harmony with the optimism which regards sin as a means of good. A sermon on the parable of the

prodigal son is likely to create sympathy only for him, while the elder son is regarded as the real reprobate, though he had always been a dutiful son and his father himself pronounced his approbation of him. An evil influence of this false optimism is also exemplified in the common opinion that the wickedest men when converted make the most eminent Christians and the most effective preachers and workers for Christ. John Bunyan, in his "Jerusalem Sinner Saved," expresses this thought with his usual vividness of imagination: "Some must be pillars in God's house; and if they be pillars of cedar they must stand while they are stout and sturdy sticks in the forest, before they are cut down and placed there. No man, when he buildeth a house, maketh the principal parts thereof of weak or feeble timber; for how could such bear up the rest? but of great and able wood. Christ Jesus also goeth this way to work; he makes of the biggest sinners bearers and supporters of the rest." But the constitutional powers of a man are not developed any faster in the action and enterprises of selfishness than in the action and enterprises of faith and love. And, in respect to moral character and the Christian life, the life of selfishness is a degeneracy and not a growth. The sinner is the tree with dry-rot at its heart; the good timber is the tree which from the seed up has grown sound and strong in the garden of the Lord. The fact also is overlooked that during all the years of outbreaking wickedness the sinner had been doing evil and starting evil influences which continue their deadly work after he is converted and after he is dead. And the investigation of the facts shows that such converts do not usually become the most eminent Christians nor accomplish the most good.

IV. Theodicy and the Revelation of God in Christ. — After the earthly history of the human race is completed, the righteousness and benevolence of God in all his dealings with man will be clearly seen in the history itself and its final issues. This is in precise accord with the Christian revelation of the final judgment. Then all secret things will be brought to light; there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, and hid which shall not be known. Then the books of life and death, in which the whole history of man is recorded, will be opened, and men will be judged out of the things written in the books, according

to their works. This day of consummation will be the great day which will justify the ways of God and reveal to every mind God's perfect righteousness and benevolence in all his dealings with man. At every antecedent period the realization of God's archetypal plan respecting man is incomplete and some of the data are wanting for a complete theodicy founded on observed facts. But God's revelation of himself in Christ reveals to us his character, the principles and law of his government, the fact of redemption, the existence and growth of the kingdom of his redeemed, and the promise of its glorious consummation. Thus by faith in the God in Christ we are put by anticipation forward to the consummation of his kingdom and can see the archetype of truth and love which he is progressively realizing. Thus, though many questions yet remain unanswered, God is revealed as the God of love, and we have given to our faith a complete justification of his ways with men.

In this revelation as recorded in the Bible we have reiterated assertions that God is love, that he is perfect in righteousness and benevolence. We have his revelation of himself in the giving of his law and in the proclaiming and enforcing of it by his prophets. In the Old Testament we find the beginning of the kingdom of God gathered out of the world; the history of his care of his people in educating them in the knowledge and love of God and in all righteousness; and the ever-brightening outlook to its development into a spiritual and universal kingdom in the Messianic days.

In Christ, when he has come, we have the great revelation of God's righteousness and good-will in the face of sin and suffering. In him is the great revelation of God's law and righteousness. The law requires love; and the spirit of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice in the service of others is of the essence of love. Christ coming to redeem the world from sin, in his humiliation, in his human life of perfect love, in his suffering and death, obeyed that law to its utmost requirement, and proclaimed and maintained, in the face of the opposition and assaults of the wicked, its universality, authority, and inviolability. The righteousness and law of God were proclaimed on Sinai. They were more grandly and more fully proclaimed from the lips of the Man of sorrows in the sermon on the mount, and in all the teachings of his ministry among men, and in his life of love, holy,

harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. But they had their most sublime proclamation on Calvary. The cross of the divine Saviour, suffering and dying under the assaults of the wicked to redeem men from their selfishness to the life of love, proclaims with sublime significance to all ages the universality, the unchangeableness, the inviolable authority of God's law of love, and the righteousness of God as himself obedient to that law, enforcing it throughout all the universe, and redeeming men, not from his law, but to it, in their willing conformity to it in heart and life. And that unchangeable law, proclaimed and maintained at this cost, is simply the law of self-sacrificing love. The law is further proclaimed by Christ in his offer of forgiveness to the sinner and his invitation to all to come to him. The indispensable condition of justification is that the sinner come to Christ in faith. But in thus putting his trust in Christ he necessarily renounces his self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying, returns from his wilful alienation of himself from God, and chooses God in Christ as his supreme object of trust and service. The faith which is the condition of justification is itself the beginning of the love in which all right character consists; it is itself the renunciation of self as the supreme object of trust and service, and the return to willing conformity with the eternal law of God. Even through the blood of Christ, no sinner is accepted till he renounces his sin and returns in willing obedience to God. Thus by losing his life he finds it; by renouncing himself he finds God as his redeemer; therein he finds himself, no longer a castaway, a spiritual dead-beat, but his true self, realizing the higher possibilities of his being in the life of faith, which is in its essence the renunciation of self, and works by love.

Christ reveals also God's good-will, his mercifulness toward sinners, his sympathy with men in suffering and sorrow, his grace in redeeming them from the power of evil. He reveals also sin as the real and only essential evil. He can bless men only as he saves them from sin. In the infinite wealth of God's resources there is nothing which can be a blessing to one persisting in sin. Christ also reveals the reality of the moral system with its inviolable free agency, the impossibility of changing a free will by almightiness, and the existence of sinners who stand immovable in resistance of God in the highest exercise of his redeeming grace.

Therefore, before the cross of Christ, whatever speculative questions remain unanswered, we see God clearly revealing himself as love, acting always to bring men away from their selfishness and its inevitable misery to the life of love and its heavenly bliss, away from the world that lieth in wickedness into participapation in his kingdom of righteousness and peace. Many of the ethnic religions recognize a god sharing the sufferings of men for their help. The revelation of God in Christ gives the divine reality of which man has so deeply felt the need. It shows us God's love to man, when revealed in Christ under human limitations and conditions, as a suffering and self-sacrificing love even unto death to save men from sin. Through this revelation of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and of man in his immeasurable worth as a child of God and in his hope full of immortality, man attains —

> "that blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened, . . .
> While, with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

The law of love seems to arise into human consciousness on occasion of the same condition of man which is also the occasion of suffering and the liability to sin. So soon as a man knows himself as a rational free person in a moral system, he knows that he ought not to live for himself exclusively, but must respect the rights of others in the common system. Thus he becomes aware of the law of love. But there must be constant interaction of persons in a moral system; therefore they cannot escape being dependent on one another. They crowd and jostle each other, and, as in every conflict of forces, the law of the survival of the fittest prevails and the strong overpower the weak. Here, then, is a source of privation, suffering, and sorrow. Precisely here is the occasion on which the law of love asserts itself in the rational consciousness; no man liveth by or for himself alone. Men are also dependent on the forces of nature; these hinder or overpower them; and this, again, is a source of privation and suffering. And no man alone can contend successfully against the powers of

nature, civilize the savage earth and compel it to yield its powers and resources to his service. It is only by their combined skill and strength that men subdue the earth and take possession of its resources. Here, again, in man's dependence on nature and his conflict with its forces, which are sources of privation and suffering, is an occasion on which man may see the necessity, authority, and obligation of the law of self-renouncing love. As no man liveth for himself, so it is equally true that no man can live by himself alone.

This fact — that men are environed by the universe with all its mighty cosmic forces, obliged to acquire the mastery of its powers and resources as essential to their own development, and even to their continued existence, and so are subject to privation and suffering and obliged to put forth their energies in wisely-directed and vigorous action — is the most effective stimulus to human progress. If, however, this issues only in selfish competition, each trying to crowd out his fellow-men and to appropriate their acquisitions and powers to the service of himself, disintegration and degeneration necessarily ensue. The very condition of man, obliged to assert his mastery of the cosmic forces and resources of his environment, legitimately compels him to see his dependence on his fellow-men, and thus to seek to co-operate with them for their common well-being. This is the necessity emphasized in the revelation of God in Christ, that man can realize his normal development and well-being, alike of the individual and of society, only by conformity with the law of self-sacrificing love, each man rendering loving service to his neighbor as to himself in supreme love to the common God and Father of all. In this universal love is the stimulus which calls into action man's highest powers and promotes effectively his intellectual and physical, not less than his moral and spiritual, development and progress.

> "When each man finds his own in others' good,
> And all men live in noble brotherhood,
> Then shall the reign of mind commence on earth,
> And, starting fresh as from a second birth,
> Man, in the sunshine of the world's new spring,
> Shall walk abroad o'er earth as some new glorious thing."

V. Pessimism. — The argument that there is no God, founded on the existence of sin and suffering, is also refuted by the fact

that it necessarily involves pessimism. In this form it has of late been urged upon us. Pessimism is the doctrine that the universe in its essential constitution and its necessary evolution is productive of more evil than good; that, therefore, in it non-existence is preferable to sensitive or conscious existence in any form. The examination of this doctrine will show that it is not sustained by facts: it will expose the false principles assumed in its defence, and its deadly practical tendencies; it will show that pessimism is itself a refutation of the argument against theism founded on the existence of sin and suffering, by showing that, if valid, it necessarily issues in absurdity. For pessimism is possible only on the basis of atheism. It necessarily rests on the assumption that the universe is not grounded in reason nor constituted and evolved in accordance with rational principles and laws and for the progressive realization of rational ideals of perfection and well-being, and thus leaves no basis for the reality or possibility of human knowledge; it rests also on the assumption that the universe is not constituted and evolved in accordance with the law of love as supreme, and thus leaves no basis for moral distinctions or æsthetic ideals.

As a temporary mood of feeling, called forth usually by great and long-continued distress, it has always been familiar. As a philosophical theory of life and the universe it has been familiar to oriental thought in Buddhism, which is the great and original representative of pessimism. Till recently, as a philosophy, it has been foreign to the thinking of the western nations. The philosophers of Greece and Rome speculated profoundly on life and its highest good; but they have taken it for granted that it is good. A school of pessimists has now arisen in Germany, who proclaim and defend as the true philosophy of life and of the universe the pessimism which before, among the western peoples, had been only the unreasoned and transient cry of weariness, perplexity, and distress. Human thought in its circuits often comes round to ancient and exploded errors, and propounds and defends them with eagerness as new discoveries solving some great problem of life. The present century has been prolific in bringing forth old theories as new, and pessimism, as a sort of Buddhism transplanted in Europe, is an instance of it. Of its supporters, Schopenhauer and Hartmann are the most widely known. The former teaches that this is the worst possible world.

The latter agrees with the optimism of Leibnitz that this is the best possible world; but teaches that "pain greatly preponderates over pleasure, not merely as a general fact, but also in the case of every individual, even of the person who lives under the most favorable conditions." They and their less known followers differ from Buddhism and from one another as to particular phases of the philosophical basis of pessimism; but they all agree in the practical conclusion that, to any finite being, sensitive or conscious life, from its lowest to its highest forms, is dissatisfying, pitiable, worthless. It is the conclusion expressed in the bitter words of Byron:

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'T is something better not to be." [1]

Because, of late, pessimistic theories have been thus thrust upon us, the theodicy of the present day must notice them.

1. The testimony to which pessimism appeals is untrustworthy. The pessimist argues that the common testimony of men, reflecting on the past, is that life has been unsatisfactory. No one, he says, would be willing to go back and live his life over again. This certainly rests on no arithmetical count, on no careful investigation and cross-questioning of testimony, on no tables of statistics prepared with scientific accuracy. This utterance of dissatisfaction is usually an expression of a transitory feeling rather than of a deliberate judgment. The feeling itself is not a disgust with life, but is the undying impulse of the instinctive and never-resting movement of the soul forward to higher development and attainments. Hence the going back from maturity to immaturity, to the repetition of work already done and of joys already experienced to satiety, is repelled by the soul ever seeking to surpass itself and its past conditions, to transcend its physical environment and to attain a larger and higher life, of which it always dimly feels itself capable. Probably, if the choice were distinctly between living life over again and total annihilation, most men would choose the former.

The pessimist appeals also to the testimony of the poets. Such testimony is easily found in the poetry of all ages and civilizations.

[1] Euthanasia, Works, vol. i. p. 268, Little & Brown's ed.

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

"With them the seed of wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the harvest which I reaped —
I came like water and like wind I go."

Homer makes Zeus say: —

"The race of mortal men,
Of all that breathe and crawl upon the earth,
Is the most wretched."

Elysium does not better the case, for he makes the shade of Achilles say:

"I would be
A laborer on earth and serve for hire
Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,
Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down to death."

The chorus, contemplating the fate of Œdipus and his race, is made by Sophocles to say: —

"The happiest fate of man is not to be;
And next in bliss is he who, soon as born,
From the vain world and all its sorrows free,
Shall whence he came with speediest foot return;
For youth is full of folly, toils, and woes,
Of war, sedition, pain, and strife,
With all the busy ills of life,
Till helpless age comes creeping on,
Deserted, friendless and alone,
Which neither power, nor joy nor pleasure knows."

We find similar strains in modern poets, some of whom, like Byron, Shelley, Leopardi, and Heine, seem to be distinctively poets of cynicism and despair: —

"The flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright."[1]

[1] Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, p. 40; Iliad, Bk. xvii. 447; Odyssey xi. 489-491; Œdipus Coloneus, 1225-1238; Shelley, "Mutability," Works, vol. iii. p. 178, Little & Brown's ed.

Similar sentiments might be greatly multiplied. But they are not testimonies of the poets to the truth of pessimism as a philosophical theory of life. The poet pictures the passing moods of his own mind and all the varying aspects and moods of human life. It does not belong to him to strike the balance of moral forces, or, in delineating one passion or scene of life, to stop and explain that there are other and modifying feelings, thoughts, and conditions. These sad strains are simply the poetical expression of the darker feelings and conditions which are realities in human life. It would be easy, on the other hand, to multiply poetical quotations picturing the bright side of life, inspiring man with courage and enthusiasm, kindling hope, and rousing him to the consciousness of his greatness, his power and his capacity for all that is perfect, ennobling, and good, and animating him with joy.

It is remarkable that pessimistic sentiments abound in voluptuous poets. This is because their thought is concentrated on the gratification of sensual desires. They experience the transitoriness and emptiness of sensual pleasure; they are blind to the higher and spiritual life, and know nothing of the dignity, serenity, and strength which belong to it. The very shortness of life and the transitoriness of its sensual pleasures madden them to a more furious pursuit of them. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The principle of this is illustrated, in Mr. Browning's "Pippa Passes," by Pippa's miserly care for every moment of her one holiday: —

> O Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
> A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
> The least of thy gazes or glances,
> (Be they grants thou art bound to, or gifts above measure)
> One of thy choices, or one of thy chances,
> (Be they tasks God imposed thee, or freaks at thy pleasure)
> — My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
> Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!
>
> *Pippa Passes.* — ROBERT BROWNING, Poetical Works, vol. ii. pp. 221, 222, London ed. 1882.

Wordsworth penetrated through all seemings of sense to the greater and higher realities of man's being. The voluptuous poet never sees the true significance of life nor knows its hidden treasures. Disappointment may be the means of opening the eyes to the secret of life, and suffering may be the occasion of

developing the highest power. By regulating the desires, by restraining and directing them with motives from the higher and spiritual life, one finds the true worth and discovers and possesses the true treasures of his being; as, in the story-books, one touches a hidden spring and opens a hidden door through which he enters the vaulted rooms filled with treasure. Wordsworth is a poet who reveals to us these hidden treasures. And is there a pessimistic line in all his writings?

The testimony cited in favor of pessimism is offset also by the facts that all men love life, and, with very few exceptions, cling to it under whatever disappointments, anxiety and sorrow.

> "For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?"

Hartmann sets this testimony aside as untrustworthy, because men are necessarily driven to overrate the worth of life through the ineradicable impulse of the unconscious will. So Jean Paul says: "We do not love life because it is beautiful, but because we must love it, and hence it happens that we draw the inverse conclusion, — that is, because we love life it is beautiful." But here is the gross inconsistency, in attempting to ascertain what estimate men have made of the worth of life, of rejecting all testimony that life is esteemed as good, and considering only the comparatively infrequent testimony, wrung from men usually in extraordinary trials, that life is evil. Hartmann avoids this inconsistency by making no appeal to testimony, differing in this from Schopenhauer. But he only falls into another inconsistency, perhaps quite as glaring. He proposes to establish his doctrine on the observed facts of life, and excludes human testimony as to the worth of life, which is probably the surest and most important source of the knowledge of the facts.

2. Pessimism is not established by the observation of facts, but rests on speculative deductions from erroneous premises.

Hartmann, considering the question whether happiness is attainable by the individual, attempts to establish the negative by observation of facts. He groups the sources of pleasure and suffering under eleven heads: — Health, youth, freedom, means of comfortable subsistence; Hunger and love; Sympathy, friendship, domestic happiness; Vanity, ambition, desire of fame and domin-

ion ; Religious edification ; Immorality ; Enjoyment of science and art ; Sleep and dreams ; Pursuit of wealth ; Envy, ill-will, vexation, lamenting over the past, repentance, hate, revenge, anger ; Hope.[1] This classification evidently rests on no scientific principle and is the result of no scientific investigation. It must have been a tumbling together of human feelings and conditions as they happened to occur to the writer. It is both defective and repetitious. And under each head no exact statistical results are attained. He omits, for example, sports of all kinds, wit, humor, fun, and laughter. He omits, also, all the pleasures of memory, real and soothing both in the memory of past joys, of past sorrows, and of departed friends. He has no glimpse of the significance of Tennyson's lines :

> "'T is better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all."

His evidence that it is an illusion to expect a preponderance of happiness through the progress of mankind in the future is open to similar criticism. He overlooks the evidence, which Mr. Spencer finds in evolution, of the progress of mankind to a happier life insured through the universal prevalence of love. It is needless to dwell on these details. His whole investigation is vitiated by the false pessimistic conception of man and human life already exposed, and the consequent omission of the most important facts bearing on the question, or a failure to apprehend their real significance.

3. Pessimism is founded on false assumptions as to the nature and sources of human happiness and well-being. As Schopenhauer presents it, it assumes that pain alone is positive ; man feels his life chiefly in uneasiness, pain, and sorrow. Pleasure is nothing positive ; it is the mere absence of pain ; in it man is scarcely conscious of himself. The utmost good attainable by any finite being is the absence of suffering. "We feel pain, but not painlessness ; we feel care, but not freedom from care ; fear, but not security. We feel the wish as we feel hunger and thirst ; but as soon as it is fulfilled, it is the same as with the agreeable morsel, which, the very moment it is swallowed, ceases to be tasted. . . . Only pain and want can be felt positively and so announce themselves. Happiness, on the contrary, is merely negative. Accord-

[1] Philosophie des Unbewussten, Part C, xii. pp. 549–595.

ingly we do not appreciate the three greatest goods of life, — health, youth, and freedom — so long as we possess them; but only after they are lost; for these also are negations. We do not perceive that certain days of our lives were happy till they have given place to unhappy ones. . . . Our happiness lies ever in the future or in the past. The present is like a small dark cloud which the wind drives over the sunny plain. Before it and behind it all is bright; beneath it the shadow which itself always casts. Therefore the present is always unsatisfying; the future is uncertain and the past gone beyond recovery. Life, with its hourly, daily, weekly, and yearly, little, great, and greater adversities, with its disappointed hopes and its misfortunes baffling all calculation, bears so plainly the stamp of something made to be disgusting to us, that it is difficult to conceive how any one could mistake it and convince himself that it was designed to be thankfully enjoyed, and man to be happy. . . . If there were a hundredfold less evil in the world than there is, yet the mere existence of evil is sufficient to establish the truth that the existence of the world is not an occasion for rejoicing but of grief; that its non-existence would be preferable to its existence; that in its fundamental ground it is something which ought not to be." [1]

Hartmann rejects Schopenhauer's doctrine that pleasure is merely negative; but with concessions and explanations which bring him practically to essentially the same result.[2] Both practically concur in Petrarch's saying, that a thousand pleasures are not worth one pain. Hence, the more a being is developed and the more and greater its powers and susceptibilities, the more are its desires, and, therefore, the more and greater its uneasiness in the sense of want and the greater its misery. The brute is happier, that is, less miserable, than man, the savage than the civilized, the uneducated than the educated man.[3]

Another false assumption is that man's life is solely a life of desire and that the sole object of desire is pleasure. Desire is merely an uneasiness in the sense of want, and pleasure is only

[1] Schopenhauer, "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," vol ii. chap. 46, pp. 571–574.

[2] Phil. des Unbewussten, Part C, xii., 1, pp. 540–549. Ed. Berlin, 1869.

[3] See Hartmann, "Phil. des Unbewuss." Part C, xii. pp. 616, 624, 598; Part B, xi. p. 314.

the absence of pain ; and this negation called pleasure is the sole object of human desire, and this desire is the radical impulse of all human action. Even as Hartmann modifies this, the uneasiness, the want, the pain, are in intensity and duration far greater than the pleasure and assert themselves far more powerfully in the consciousness. Man feels himself only in pain and the sense of want. Then the life of desire must involve a vast preponderance of suffering. And, further, the desire of pleasure is in its nature insatiable ; the pessimist assumes that it is the radical impulse of life ; thus it makes the person always restless in a sense of want. Hence, whatever a man gains, he only throws it into a bottomless abyss which always yawns for more. Nothing can close it till the man throws himself in and exists no more. And besides, desires commonly grow by what they feed on. Acquisition is but the fuel to the flame. This is true, to some extent, even of the appetites, though they are temporarily satisfied by indulgence ; as, for example, the appetite for opium, tobacco, and alcoholic stimulants. So covetousness, ambition, and other desires, are strengthened by the pursuit and acquisition of their objects. Alexander wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Thus it is impossible by any acquisitions to satiate desire. Man is doomed, by the very constitution of his being, to continuous dissatisfaction, want, and misery. And to add to his wretchedness he is always illuded with successive hopes that he may escape from his misery and be blessed, and is always disappointed.

If these assumptions and the conception of man necessarily involved in them are correct, pessimism is the inevitable inference. But they are false. The exposure of their falsity is the complete refutation of pessimism.

It is to be noticed that the foregoing argument of the pessimist does not consist in the presentation of observed facts, but is a deduction from false assumptions as to the nature and sources of human happiness. Even Hartmann, while attempting to rest his pessimism on observed facts, starts with essentially the same assumptions, and therefore overlooks important facts and misses the significance of others. Pessimism, as resting on these assumptions, reveals itself as founded on the lowest form of hedonism. But this is a false philosophy of life. It is a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of this egoistic hedonism or Epicureanism

that it issues naturally and logically in pessimism. I proceed to consider the real facts as to the constitution of man which annul the premises of the pessimist's deduction.

In the first place, it is not true that pleasure is the mere negation of pain. Desire implies, indeed, an uneasiness in the sense of want. But it is also an impulse to action, and so gives zest and interest to life. And in its gratification there is more than the removal of uneasiness; there is positive, often intense, pleasure. This is true of the gratification even of the appetites of sense.

In the second place, man is the subject of many desires, and not of one only, the desire of pleasure or enjoyment. He desires specific objects. A desire for the object must exist before there can be any pleasure in possessing the object, or any motive to seek it. One cannot enjoy eating who has no appetite for food. The desires are as numerous and varied as the specific objects on which they fasten. They are the points of sensibility through which a person is conscious of his environment. They are a part of the many-sidedness of man, by which he comes into contact with his environment at many points, and is susceptible of receiving many and varied influences from every point of his environment in contact with him. He can see, hear, taste, smell, handle. He can look at it in the light of reason and find its significance and place in science, its law, its perfection or beauty, its bearing on the practical work and uses of life. He finds in it steps up to God. A botanist spent eleven years investigating the green substance growing on stagnant ponds. The lowest thing may call forth the highest rational and spiritual powers. One might spend a lifetime in learning all which may be known about a pebble or a blade of grass. A few old ruins, a few ancient carvings on stones, arouse the interest of intelligent people all over the world, and reveal the history of ancient ages. Man is so many-sided that any point of his environment touches many susceptibilities and awakens interest in many directions; and, conversely, in the interest peculiar to any one of his susceptibilities, man passes out through any point of his environment to explore the riches of the universe as related to that one point and that one susceptibility. This is something very different from the dreary and weary monotony of life actuated by only one never-changing motive.

In the third place, human life is not a life of desire only, whether the desires be one or many. Schopenhauer assumes that the fundamental impelling force of life is will. By will he does not mean the power of rational self-determination. He seems to mean a blind instinct or impulse to seek pleasure, — an impulse which must always drive a man on to seek some enjoyment other than he has, and so can never permit him to rest, or at any moment of pleasure to cry to it to stay because it is satisfying. On the contrary, true psychology recognizes in the constitution of man a radical impulse to exert all his faculties and to find scope for all his energies which makes him capable of joy in work, in overcoming difficulties, in achievement. This is the play-impulse in the young. Through life it impels to action and makes it a joy, while life with nothing to do is full of ennui and weariness. Thus man, by virtue of his constitution, is a worker and an energizer; in the conscious fulness of life and power he finds himself impelled to put forth, to give out; he forgets pleasure in enterprise, work, and service. Pessimism, on the contrary, conceives of man as by his constitution a mere recipient; it conceives of service to others as so much dead loss to self, to be submitted to only with pain; of work and achievement as only evil, under which men must always whine; of man as conscious only of want, — a beggar reaching out empty hands for some one else to fill. It recognizes blessedness only in inaction and repose, in the life of self-indulgence and receptivity, in being ministered unto, never in ministering to others. It can conceive of no heaven except the deliverance from all exertion and all motives to exertion, so that not even a desire shall ever interrupt the lubberly inaction.

4. This brings to light a more fundamental error at the basis of pessimism. It does not recognize man's personality, his existence as a rational and morally responsible free agent in a moral system, under the government of the absolute Reason, energizing in perfect wisdom and love, whom we call God. It has no conception of the moral system in which every man's destiny is put in his own power; in which every person who lives the life of universal love in faith in God finds the universe so constituted that he is sure to realize the highest and only true good in the perfection of his being, in his harmony with God and the constitution of the universe, and in the blessedness inseparable therefrom; and in which every one who lives the life of selfishness can

realize only evil in missing the perfection of his own being, in living in disharmony with God and the constitution of the universe, and in the unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and suffering inseparable therefrom. Hence the pessimist has no thought of the education and discipline of men in the moral system, and of the uses of disappointment, sorrow, and suffering for subduing the power of sin, strengthening the character in righteousness, and developing benevolence in helping those who need. It recognizes man as a mere creature of blind necessity, with no capacity but to long for pleasure and to seek it in vain, and to weep and cry because he cannot receive without work all the pleasure he wants. To the pessimist man is only a conscious negation, an embodied greed, a living misery.

Here, in the personality of man, opens a sphere of rational, moral, and spiritual acting and receiving, hidden from the pessimist behind his false assumptions. Here we find the true good of man and his capacity to attain it, for the conception of which the pessimist has no data. Man is blessed both in achieving and in receiving. And the scope and range of the achieving and the receiving is above the range of vision in which the pessimist, by his assumptions, arbitrarily confines himself. Man lives in a spiritual environment as real as the physical, and touches it as really in its affluence of influence, and in his own many-sidedness. Schopenhauer recognizes this higher sphere of enjoyment, but only in the æsthetic emotions. And of this he says that, in perceiving the beautiful, man is simply a seer, contemplating it apart from all personal desires and action; it is an emergence of the mind "out of the endless stream of willing." This desireless, motiveless rest in contemplation is the blessedness of the gods as conceived by the Epicureans. It is possible to but few; to them it is transient, and the culture prerequisite insures a more than commensurate susceptibility to suffering. Hartmann includes immorality in his classification of the sources of pleasure, but he does not include virtue, nor recognize the satisfaction of fulfilling the obligations and doing the duties of daily life. He alludes to benevolence, but only as self-sacrifice, and therefore to be counted as suffering. This is all in striking contrast with Christianity. The man who lives to make the world wiser and better, not to get the most possible out of it for his own enjoyment, is not likely to raise the question, Is life worth living? It is the greedy

life, always sucking in, which is conscious of its own emptiness. It is the life of love, always flowing out, which is blessed in the consciousness of satisfying fulness. The pessimist has never discovered Christ's secret: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." He has never discovered that love, even in its self-sacrifice, is the power that develops the man, the power that survives, that renews and blesses. He knows nothing of our Lord's teaching: Greatness for service, therefore greatness by service.[1]

Immortality, involved in man's personality and his relations as a personal and spiritual being to God, is an element, in the investigation of the worth of life, of which the pessimist, in accordance with his false assumptions, can take no notice. Professor Bowne says: "We do not agree with the pessimist, but our chief reason is our faith in a future life."[2] But before we can appeal to immortality a prior question must be settled. It is the question, Is life worth living? If life is worthless in itself, if

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time,"

then its prolongation would be the prolongation of evil. We must find that the life of man, estimated by the standard of perfect reason, has worth in itself, or at least is capable of being developed into a worthy life, a life having real worth, before we can argue that its continuance would be a blessing. If that is shown, then life is a good, and worth living, though it continues but for a day; then its endless duration with endless progress is a blessing, and silences all the objections of the pessimist. The essential worth of man's life is evident so soon as we discover his higher powers and capacities as a rational personal being. It becomes more evident when we know him as related to God in the universal moral system. It is made luminous with the light of heaven in the revelation of God in Christ. Man is a worker with God in establishing and advancing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will and in transforming human society into it; and thus in introducing all who come into the world in successive generations to the eternal life, energy, and blessedness of heaven. And all that life, on earth or in heaven, is love; this is

[1] Matth. xx. 25–28.

[2] Studies in Theism, p. 374.

the moving force of all spiritual energy in man and God, in this life and in the life to come. "A recent German writer says that both Jesus and Schopenhauer taught the true doctrine of self-renouncement; but that Schopenhauer faced the pessimism which is the doctrine's natural accompaniment, whereas Jesus sought to escape it by the dream of a paradise to come." [1] But Jesus in his life, his death, and his teachings revealed the universality, the supreme authority, the unchangeableness and inviolability of the law of love; the inevitable blessedness of every person in this universe who lives in harmony with God in conformity with this law; the inevitable missing of all blessedness by every person who lives the life of selfishness in opposition to this law. He did not teach that the self-renunciation essential in love is the loss of good, the abrading and final extinction of the individual personality. It is merely the voluntary change in the direction of the man's energies, the renunciation of self in the free choice of God and our neighbor as the supreme object of trust and service, instead of self. And by this life of universal love, and by it alone, does man realize his true greatness, do his proper work, attain the true development and perfection of his being, and therein his true and highest good. Jesus makes us know that the eternal life of God is the life of love, and that man by the trust and service of love participates even on earth in that divine and eternal life. Thus he breaks through the limiting, defective, and false conception of life which hides from the pessimist the true significance of man and his life and reveals the spiritual powers and capacities, the higher possibilities of his being by which man, if he will, may participate in the life which is rational and spiritual, which is divine and eternal. In revealing God Jesus also reveals man. In the light of this revelation all pessimistic views of man and his life vanish like shadows when flooded with sunshine. Christianity is the religion of promise, of hope, and of courage. In revealing the love of God in Christ it reveals also in him the ideal of man, the highest possibilities of his being, the great work which is given him to do. It calls him to exercise the Christlike love which is the essence of the divine character, and to be a worker together with God in transforming human society into the kingdom of God on earth under the reign of

[1] Matthew Arnold, "Last Essays on the Church and Religion," pp. xxvi. xxvii.

universal love, from which men in successive generations are to pass at death into the same kingdom to be perfected in love, developed in all their powers, and glorified in the life eternal. Inspired with this Christlike love, glowing with enthusiasm for humanity, made fearless through faith in God and the expectation of achievement according to his promise, Christians are, like Paul, only attracted to more energetic work by the fact that "there are many adversaries;" they take joyfully all incidental privation and suffering, and rejoice in exerting all their energies in extending over all the earth the reign of righteousness, good-will, and peace, and preparing men for glory, honor, and immortality. These are the actual possibilities and the true aims of humanity, which pessimism entirely overlooks. Thus it shuts every door of hope, quenches all enthusiasm, suppresses all enterprise for human well-being, and limits the possibilities of human life to the dismal and despairing wail, Life is not worth living.

5. The pessimistic error strikes its roots still deeper. It is founded on a fundamentally erroneous conception of the universe itself. It assumes that the universe is in itself a contradiction; that in all its ongoing it is an abortive attempt to realize an absurdity.

First, it assumes that the universe has its ultimate ground in unreason, in something unconscious, unintelligent, impersonal, irrational. It is thus in direct contradiction of modern science, which rests on the fundamental assumption that the universe is intelligible, amenable to reason; and that it and all the realities in it are capable of being rationally apprehended and accounted for, of being scientifically known by minds having opportunity and powers to observe all the facts.

The philosophy of J. G. Fichte and Hegel did much to weaken the influence of Kant's theory of the unknowable "thing in itself." Schopenhauer, who claims to be a faithful though discriminating disciple of Kant, made prominent again this unknowable noumenon. With Kant, the pessimists generally recognize a thing in itself, "the unexplored remainder" behind all phenomena and manifesting itself in them. Schopenhauer calls it Will. He thus differs from Kant, and from his followers, Hamilton and Spencer, who call it the Unknowable. Instead of considering will a manifestation of force, he considers force a manifestation of will. He thus seems to distinguish his theory

of the universe from materialism. But will, as he defines it, is not the power that freely determines in the light of reason the ends to which it will direct its energy and the exertion of its energy for the end chosen. On the contrary, he explicitly teaches that "we must think away the co-operation of the intellect if we would comprehend the nature of will in itself." In itself it is purposeless. But, as the fundamental reality manifested in the phenomenal world, it is "the will to live." "Everything urges and presses to existence — where possible, to organic existence, that is, to life, and then to the greatest possible augmentation of life."[1] This is the keynote (*Grundton*) of all life. In man it is the fundamental but blind impulse of his nature which always urges him to seek something which he does not possess and makes him incapable of satisfaction in any attainment. Potential energy is at the basis of will, but it is not a peculiarity distinctive of it. Schopenhauer gains nothing by giving to this potential energy, which pervades all things animate and inanimate, the name of will, while denying of it the rational intelligence which is distinctive of it as will. Science teaches the persistence of force. Schopenhauer represents this persistent force anthropomorphically and fantastically by calling the force will, ascribing to it restlessness and impulse, and finally resolving it into desire, while inconsistently insisting that in its essence it is unconscious and purposeless. Thus the universe is ultimately grounded in unconscious force, acting in necessity without intelligence, guidance, or purpose, and yet always uneasy and restless with blind desire and impelling itself to seek what it can never attain.

Hartmann returns, in respect to this point, to the philosophy of Hegel. He holds that a rational element must be united with the will at the basis of all reality. The world-process thus becomes identified with the logic-process, because the idea is the essence of the world.[2] He regards causality "as logical necessity which receives actuality through the will." He regards the ultimate ground of the universe as the one identical subject exercising the functions both of will and intellect. In some of his writings he presents the evidence of a directing and regulating mind in

[1] Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, vol. ii., chap. 28, p. 351.
[2] Phil. des Unbewussten, p. 648 f.

nature with such clearness and force that one might take him for a theist.[1] But he nullifies all this by his primal assumption that the ground of the universe, notwithstanding its reason and will, is the Unconscious. Thus his theory also falls back on the conception of the universe as grounded in blind necessity and unreason.

Secondly, as the ultimate ground of the universe is Unreason, so its essence is illusion. Pessimism teaches that the finite has no real existence. Schopenhauer teaches that the world which we perceive is merely our own perception. The subject of the perception and the object of it are merely two aspects of one and the same phenomenon, namely, our presentation or perception (*Vorstellung*). Hence the world is wholly an illusion. The finite, with its individuation, is a veil through which we must look to see the reality. Therefore man's entire life is the pursuit of illusions. The whole past history of man is "humanity's dream, long, heavy, and confused." Hartmann sums it up under three heads. First, the illusion that the individual can obtain happiness in this life: the illusion of the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews. The second, that the individual may find happiness in the life after death: the illusion of Christians. The third, that happiness may be found for the race in its progress toward perfection: illusion of the noblest minds. But the more cultivated and developed man becomes, the greater his misery.[2] Thus all human knowledge is unreal; man is but a shadow in a world of shadows; all which he thinks he knows is delusion. Such a theory of the universe contradicts reason. And it carries in it the additional absurdity that the pessimist uses his reason to disprove rationality; he sets up his own illusions as the standard by which to criticise the universe and to prove that it is an illusion; thus he also demonstrates that, if the principles of pessimism are true, its conclusions are illusive and false.

Thirdly, because, as the pessimist assumes, the ground of the universe is unreason and its essence is illusion, its whole existence must be evil. Buddhism teaches that individuation is the essen-

[1] Hartmann published in 1872 an anonymous refutation of his own principles and hypotheses: — "Das Unbewusstes vom Standpunkt der Physiologie und Descendenz-Theorie." — PROFESSOR FLINT, Antitheistic Theories, p. 534.

[2] Phil. des Unbewussten, pp. 540–627.

tial evil; that in the universe the absolute is individuated into the finite, and therefore the existence of the universe is essential evil; that the evil can be removed only when all individuated existence is reabsorbed into the absolute, and all individuals and all individual consciousness shall have ceased to exist. This assumption, on which this vast oriental philosophy of despair rests, is the same which appears in occidental philosophy in the assumption that metaphysical imperfection, which is only another name for finiteness, is in itself essential evil. It necessarily follows that the nonexistence of the universe and of all in it would be better than its existence; that it is disappointing and unsatisfying in all its issues and results; that it is productive of ever-increasing evil, —

> "One desert,
> Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break;
> But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
> Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness."

According to the theory of pessimism, the universe must be in dreadful reality what, as represented by Carlyle, it was to the Wanderer in the depth of his despair: "It seemed as if all things in the heavens above and the earth beneath would hurt me; as if the heavens and the earth were but the jaws of a devouring monster wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured." [1] And Schopenhauer, as the true description of the world according to his philosophy, gives these lines of Byron: —

> "Our life is a false nature; 't is not in
> The harmony of things, this hard decree,
> This uneradicable taint of sin,
> This boundless Upas, this all-blasting tree
> Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
> The skies, which rain their plagues on men like dew,
> Disease, death, bondage, all the woes we see,
> And worse, the woes we see not, which throb through
> The immedicable soul with heart-aches ever new." [2]

And with every advance to a higher order of life, with every advance in education, culture, and civilization, comes only an increase of misery. The theory that this wonderful and magnificent universe issues only in this result is certainly absurd.

[1] Sartor Resartus, pp. 170, 171.
[2] Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, vol. ii. p. 574, chap. 46.

Fourthly, pessimists are wont to speak of the redemption of the universe. But because the ground of the universe is unreason, its essence illusion, and its existence evil, it necessarily follows that the only redemption possible, either for the individual or the universe, is the extinction of its finite and individuated existence and its reabsorption into the infinite; then the will to live sinks back to final rest. Schopenhauer proposes the denying of the will, issuing in suicide; this, he thinks, would be most effectually done by voluntary starvation. Hartmann criticises this as insufficient, because at the utmost it is only the redemption of single individuals. He says: "The end of the conflict between the consciousness and the will, between the logical and the illogical, can be only at the goal of the development, the conclusion of the world-process, . . . the abolition of all willing in absolute non-willing." Therefore the redemption can be consummated only in the extinction of the human race and of the entire fabric of the finite universe. A method for accomplishing this he proposes, "not as an apocalypse of the end of the world, but merely to indicate that the thing is not so unthinkable as at first sight it appears." It is to be done, first, by the concentration of such a mass of will (capitalized in man) that the balance of will in the molecular, molar, and other forces in the universe will be comparatively insignificant. Then the will of humanity to annihilate itself will annihilate the whole fabric. Secondly, all mankind must become so thoroughly alive to the folly of life that the yearning for an end of existence must be the prime motive of every act. The third condition necessary for this gigantic suicide is such facility of communication that the inhabitants of the world may simultaneously execute the common resolution.[1] But even this does not insure the end. For why may not the unconscious will break out again in the will to live, and go through the same round of folly, misery, and extinction? Hartmann cannot say that this is impossible. He concludes, however, that the probability that it would make the repetition an infinite number of times is reduced to a vanishing point, and therefore we may be confident that it will at some time stop. This is indeed the philosophy of despair. The whole history of man and of the universe is the history only of illusion and failure. It is summed up by Edgar A. Poe, in his

[1] Hartmann, "Phil. des Unbewuss.," Part C, chap. xiii., pp. 635–643.

conception of a company of angels watching the performance of a drama: —

> "The play was the tragedy Man;
> And the hero, the conqueror Worm." [1]

According to the Hindu philosophy, the redemption of man is by his entrance into Nirvana. Max Müller says that, in the Brahmanic conception of it, it is a state of peaceful and satisfying existence. But if so, it is only a state of quiescence in which all desire, all action, and all motive to action have ceased. In Nirvana the soul has become bed-rid forever and is contented in its quiescence and inaction. But, according to the same authority, Buddhism recognizes no absolute Being; it is the philosophy of nothingness; there is no reality anywhere, either in the past, the present, or the future. The Nirvana, then, as the end of all illusions is the end of all conscious existence.[2] The latter would seem to be the logical conception. Because consciousness is assumed to belong only to the finite and the individuated, the cessation of these would be the cessation of all consciousness and therefore of all satisfaction and conscious peace. But, in the popular religion of the Buddhists, the God worshiped is the Buddha, the man who has become God, and Nirvana is a life of endless blessedness after the trials of all successive births are ended.

6. It follows, of course, that pessimism, as a philosophy, in its practical character and influence, is fatally evil. It is needless, however, to dwell on the obvious fact that the pessimistic philosophy in itself comes down upon the soul like a mephitic air, smothering all hope, aspiration, and virtuous endeavor and extinguishing all moral and spiritual life.

But the objection is urged that Buddhism teaches the ethics of

[1] Ludwig Noiré, in "Die Welt als Entwicklung des Geistes," says that a gentleman in Florence, Italy, determined to commit suicide. He announced his determination to some of his friends and invited them to dine with him on the day appointed for his suicide. When they arrived, a sarcophagus was in the hall. They had a right merry time at dinner. Then they went to the hall, the gentleman killed himself, they laid the body in the sarcophagus and buried it. Atheism naturally issues in pessimism. Pessimism logically issues in suicide, as Schopenhauer and Hartmann explicitly teach. The decay of religious faith naturally tends to a justification of suicide and an increase in the number of persons who kill themselves.

[2] Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i. pp. 226, 231, 232.

universal love side by side with its atheism, nihilism, and extreme pessimism. To this it may be replied that ethical ideas and principles have their foundation in the constitution of man. A change of a man's speculative opinion respecting God and the human soul makes no change in his spiritual and moral constitution. His reason, his conscience, his constitutional moral and spiritual susceptibilities remain and in their development awaken him to moral and spiritual ideas, motives, and sentiments. Hence, in all tribes and races of men, moral and spiritual ideas and sentiments are found. And in all nations, sufficiently advanced to have a literature, we find more or less distinct recognitions of the law of love. This is sufficient to account for the fact that the Buddhists recognize this law and many of the precepts implied in it. A more specific answer would require a statement of what Buddhism is. This can be only indicated here and with the utmost brevity.

Rhys Davids says: "Nirvana has been supposed by some European scholars to mean a blissful state in which the soul still exists in an everlasting trance. There can, however, now be no longer any doubt on the point. . . . Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul as a thing distinct from the parts and powers of man which are dissolved at death, and the Nirvana of Buddhism is simply Extinction." Buddhism teaches a doctrine analogous to that of the transmigration of souls, but modified by its denial that any soul or spirit exists in man. It teaches that the influence or product of every one's life, according to the universal law of cause and effect, is transmitted beyond the death of the individual, and appears in a new life of some sort. This transmitted product is called Karma. As the man at death transmits the Karma of his own life into another life, so he himself was but the Karma of a previous life. Whence the Karma originated Buddhism does not say. It does not concern itself with the origin of the universe or of life. It concerns itself only with the perpetual succession and change, which are all that is; no being really is; there are only change and succession; "nothing is, every thing becomes," exists only in transition. Rhys Davids says: "Karma is the sum of merit and demerit, which, as each one's demerit is the greater of the two, often comes practically to much the same thing as sin or error." Thus we go back of every individual life to Karma as "the seed of

existence." And because in the sum of life there is more demerit than merit, this and the life into which it issues is itself always evil. The "enlightenment" which Buddhism aims to impart to man is the discovery of the worthlessness and the illusiveness of all existence. In this enlightenment all desire to live, all cleaving to existence will cease; and through successive stages the Buddhist saint gets free from all sensuality, from all revengeful feelings, and from all evil desires, from ignorance, doubt, and heresy, and from all unkindliness, and exercises good-will without measure towards all beings; thus he attains to universal charity. He who has attained this state passes at death immediately into Nirvana. The Karma, the seed of existence in him, is rooted out, he transmits no new life to the future, he escapes all the desires and miseries of existence in the extinction of his being. And in proportion as any one approximates to this highest state, he at death transmits less of the evil seed of existence to the future; and in the new life, beginning on this higher plane, the person may attain the highest state, or at least advance nearer to it. And the hope which Buddhism holds out to men is that the whole human race will thus be eventually redeemed from existence and its inevitable evils into Nirvana, the extinction of their being. Thus the aim of the Buddhism of the East is the same with that of the pessimism of the West, the extinction of all conscious existence, though it expresses its aim in different terms and proposes its realization by less violent and fantastical means.

Therefore, while the morality taught by Buddhism has a striking resemblance in forms of expression to that of Christianity, the two in their significance and application are in striking contrast. Buddhism rests on a philosophy of negation and nihilism. Christianity recognizes the real being of the material world, of man, and of God, and reveals the vast possibilities which may be realized by man. The outcome of Buddhism is universal despair; that of Christianity is promise, progress, and hope, the future to be ever better than the past. Both require loving service to men. The only service which Buddhism can render is to enlighten man to see the illusiveness and worthlessness of life, and to teach him how to escape its miseries by attaining the extinction of his own, and ultimately of all, conscious existence. Christianity renders to man the service of disclosing to him the greatness and

worth of his being and endowments as related to God and in his likeness, presenting to him the ideal of human perfection, stimulating him to realize it, and showing him the way to his fullest development and his true well-being on earth, and to the spiritual power, perfection, blessedness, and glory of the life immortal. Buddhism teaches man that all which seems to him real is transitive and unreal, the ever-shifting scenes of a vast illusion. Christianity teaches him in the transient life of sense to realize the life of the spirit, which is everlasting. Buddhism has no recognition of faith in God and of quickening and help for man from above himself; it leaves the man unaided and alone to bear the destiny that is crushing him, with the only hope that by extreme self-denial, self-suppression, and self-sacrifice he may some time in the future reach the extinction of his being and so escape the miseries inseparable from conscious existence. Christianity teaches man that all right character begins and is developed, and all right work is done, in trust in God; that God compasses him with immeasurable love, and dwells by his Spirit in the heart of every one who will receive him, enlightening, quickening, strengthening, and constraining him with God's own grace. On the contrary, all the paths to enlightenment which Buddhism points out are in the way of self-suppression and self-extinction. It requires the suppression and eradication of all constitutional desires and instincts instead of their purification and regulation, the extinction of the being instead of its development; even the universal kindliness which it enjoins is the expression of the placidity of despair rather than of the energy of positive love. It misinterprets the self-sacrifice of love as the consent to and the desire for the extinction of the being, a seeking to crush and annihilate one's self; it makes the sacrifice of self primary, positive, and dominant in the love.[1] Christianity recognizes self-sacrifice as essential in all love. But it is merely the negative side of love, the renunciation of self as the supreme object of trust and service, which is necessarily involved in the positive act of love to God with all the heart and

[1] It is a Buddhist legend that a Buddha, or enlightened one, seeing a lame tigress starving with her whelps, freely gave himself to her to be devoured. This, certainly, in a country infested by tigers as India is, was not a self-sacrifice springing from rational love to man; but rather an act of insanity resulting from long-continued self-maceration and intense fixing of the thoughts on the one subject of the worthlessness of life.

to one's neighbor as himself. It requires love to God and man in its positive energy as primary and dominant in the love, and the self-sacrifice as incidental to the love and inseparable from it. And therein is attained, not self-extinction, but the true and highest self-development, perfection and well-being.[1] In accordance with its essential pessimism, the methods by which, as Buddhism teaches, man is to attain enlightenment and redemption are withdrawal from the world and seclusion from its business and pleasures, extreme asceticism and self-mortification, solitary and protracted meditation; not prayer, because it knows no God; not contributing to the supply of human needs by honest industry and diligence in business, but living in idleness by begging; not an active and honorable discharge of the duties and bearing the burdens of life in society, a warm interest in human affairs; not the active work and service of love for the improvement of individuals, the progress of society, and the advancement of the kingdom of God and the reign of righteousness and goodwill on earth, because the only service which can be rendered to man is to enlighten him to see the worthlessness and misery of existence and the way to the final cessation of all conscious life. A legitimate result has been that civilization under the influence of Buddhism has remained stagnant; on the contrary, the great modern progress of enlightenment in science, in industrial inventions, in political constitutions, institutions, and laws, in sociological knowledge and conditions, has been among the Christian nations.

A similar contrast appears between the founders of Christianity and of Buddhism. Kuenen says of Siddhartha Gautama: "This Buddha, a man of colossal proportions indeed, but yet of like passions and motives with ourselves, is a creation of the European scholars."[2] But in what critics have accepted as his actual history these characteristics appear. He was born heir to the sovereign of a small principality. After he left the palace of his

[1] That which doth set thee free from self shall bring
Nighness to God! This is a subtle thing
The selfless only know. Not self-possessing
Art thou thine own, but self-abandoning. — Book iii. of the "Bústán," or "Fruit-Garden" of the Persian Sufi poet Sa'di, as translated by Edwin Arnold in "With Sa'di in the Garden," p. 194.

[2] National Religions and Universal Religions, pp. 276, 277.

father he retired to solitude and subjected himself to the severest asceticism. Though after his enlightenment under the Bo tree he abated the rigor of his asceticism and mingled more with men, yet he lived by begging and as an ascetic till his death at fourscore. The society which he founded was an order of mendicants. Each member carried a brown bowl and begged his food from house to house. They wore clothing made of cast-off rags sewed together. Even their orange-colored robes were made of cloth first torn into rags and then sewed together. This society received from Gautama the doctrines and usages of primitive Buddhism and many minute rules for the regulation of conduct in accordance therewith. On the contrary, Christ came revealing the personal God perfect in wisdom and love, and revealing man in his likeness to God, in his privilege of intimate communion with him, in his immortal destiny and his possible development in power, wisdom, love and blessedness forever. Christ came "eating and drinking," mingling with men in all the common affairs of life, sympathizing with them in their joys and their sorrows, weeping over their suffering and their sin, healing the sick, going about doing good, establishing the kingdom of God into which human society is to be transformed on earth and in which it is to be continued after death in everlasting glory. Everything in Buddhism is negative, suppressing, despairing, annihilating; everything in Christianity is positive, it is promise and hope, development and progress.

Here a difficulty suggests itself, "that a religion, which ignores God and denies the existence of the soul, should be the very religion which has found most acceptance among men." This is founded on a misconception of the facts. The Buddhist doctrine, denying God and the soul and asserting nihilism and pessimism, cannot be the basis of a religion in any true sense of the word. There is no evidence that its founder ever intended it to be a religion. In fact, it has not been the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism which have gained belief among the people, but a religious worship of divinities which has grown up outside of the doctrines. The spread of Buddhism was not due to its philosophy of nihilism and pessimism, but to its practical ethical teaching, its inculcation of kindliness and good-will, its recognition of the misery of the poor, the wretched, and the oppressed; and also to the popular conception of its founder, glorified by many legends

and myths. The language used in Buddhist writings and teaching respecting continued existence in the Karma, the experience of the enlightened, and the blessedness of Nirvana, would naturally be understood by the popular mind to declare the conscious existence of the soul after death and to describe the Nirvana as an abode of conscious and everlasting blessedness; and it has led Western scholars to the same mistake. Thus, to the popular mind, unable to take up the abstruse and repulsive philosophy of nihilism, Buddhism became a religion with the worship of divinities and the expectation of blessedness after death. The Buddhas, or enlightened ones, themselves have been regarded as saints or even as gods. Professor Martin, of Pekin, says: "In China the Nirvana was found to be too subtle an idea for popular contemplation; and, in order to furnish the people with a more attractive object of worship, the Buddhists brought forward a goddess of mercy, whose highest merit was, that having reached the verge of Nirvana, she declined to enter, preferring to remain where she could hear the cries and succor the calamities of those who were struggling with the manifold evils of a world of change."[1]

7. Pessimism is proof of the existence of God by a reduction to absurdity of atheistic theories of the universe. I do not say that if we deny the existence of God the facts of the universe would prove the truth of pessimism; for our denial would make no change in the facts; and those facts, clearly and fully observed, would show the reasonableness of the universe. Pessimism is the theory that the universe is contradictory to reason in its ground, its constitution, its action, and its end; and that, therefore, human reason and knowledge are untrustworthy, unreal, and illusive. This doctrine is of the essence of atheism, and is logically involved in it in all its forms. Theism, and it alone, delivers us from this absurdity. It is the doctrine that the universe is grounded in reason, is constituted according to its rational principles and laws, and is progressively realizing a rational archetype and rational ends; and it involves the personality of man as a rational free agent, the authority of human reason, the reality and trustworthiness of human knowledge, and all those higher powers

[1] Rhys Davids says of the history of Buddhism in India that "in the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era a great persecution arose, and the Buddhists were so utterly exterminated that there is not now a Buddhist in all India."

and susceptibilities which are implied in the knowledge and service of God, and which atheism, if logical, must deny. Pessimism is therefore a proof of theism by reducing to absurdity atheism in all its forms.

And we find that the facts in the universe correspond with the theistic conception of it; and that this conception gives a reasonable explanation of facts which at first sight seem to contradict it. There is a moral system in the universe to which the physical system is subordinate. Sin exists through the free choice of finite free agents. Every rational being in it who lives wisely in obedience to the law of love is sure of the true good; and even sinners who repent may be restored to the right life and be blessed. But by its constitution, every person in it who lives the life of selfishness must miss all real good and incur evil and only evil continually. The action of God in constituting and administering it exhausts all the resources of wisdom and love to prevent sin, to rescue sinners from it, and to bring all to live the life of love, and to realize all perfection and good. The dissatisfaction of man, the staple argument of the pessimist, is simply the noble discontent of a personal and spiritual being with his physical environment, and reveals the higher capacities of his spiritual being. The man seeks his spiritual environment, and in God and the moral system under God's law and pervaded by his love, he finds it. Then privation of good and liability to suffering are inherent in finiteness; and privation and suffering become the means of education, discipline, and training under moral influences, and so of attaining the highest perfection and good.

Mr. James Sully, in his valuable work entitled "Pessimism," confines his investigation to what he calls "accessible facts," excluding God, immortality, and all in man which is involved in the knowledge and service of God. "The answer must be sought within the limits of experience." "The worth of human life, so far from being made dependent on theological propositions, is itself one of the facts on which the propositions of theology have to establish themselves, or to which at least they have to accommodate themselves."[1] He seems here to reject the Newtonian method of hypothesis, deduction, and verification, now called induction, and to confine himself to the method of observing and classifying facts. His objection would have forbidden Newton to start with

[1] Pessimism, a History and a Criticism, pp. 156, 161.

the hypothesis that the law of gravitation extends to the moon; for it was not a fact accessible within experience. With equal propriety we may start with the theory of the universe that it is grounded in reason and acts under rational laws for rational ends, and reveals the directing agency of wisdom and love, and may examine the facts to see if they correspond with this theory. And if, on other grounds than the empirical comparison of happiness and suffering, we find evidence of the truth of this theory, we may use it to account for what seems to be evil in life. It must also be noticed that the knowledge of God begins in experience and rests on it; and this includes not merely motives and emotions known as distinctively religious, but all mental acts and susceptibilities which have no significance except as they presuppose Reason as universal and supreme.

In fact pessimism, as a theory of life, both in the East and the West, has been founded on the denial of personality both in God and in man. As a philosophy and as a mood of feeling it has never been concomitant with a clear and practically dominant belief in God ruling by the law of love in a moral system. It has been a common accompaniment of a decay of religious faith. It marks a period of exhausted life, when faith and its energy working by love have decayed, a period of questioning and criticism "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," rather than occupied with "noble deeds and daring high." In such a period a common manifestation of it has been a decay of reverence for man and of regard for the sacredness of human life. This appeared in the Reign of Terror in France. What, it was asked, is killing a man but turning a few ounces of blood from one channel into another? It appears in the justification and practice of suicide in connection with the skepticism in the time of the Roman empire. Similar are the manifestations of it in our own day. As a mood of feeling it is a cynicism incompatible with the law of love and the Spirit of Christ. This is expressed by Leopardi; in a letter to Giordani he writes: "I rejoice to discover more and more the misery of men and things, to touch them with the hand, and to be seized with a cold shudder as I search through the unblessed and terrible secret of life."[1] The same was the cynicism of Diderot; "The world, viewed from the æsthetic side, appears a cabinet of caricatures; from the intellect-

[1] Sully, "Pessimism," p. 27.

ual side, a mad-house; from the moral side, a harboring place for rascals. . . . The few wide, profound, and real observers of human life have all known, and known often, this fantastic consciousness of living in a strange, distorted, and grotesque universe of lunatics, knaves, and grotesques." An incidental result and manifestation of this type of thought and mood of feeling is the prevalent realism of novels and poetry; no longer quickening and inspiring by the presentation of ideals, but harrowing, disgusting, and disheartening by presenting the lowest and worst sides of humanity and justifying it simply because they are real. But Christianity shows that the ideal is the deepest reality and is destined to realization and permanence, while the sin and evil are to pass away.

The conclusion is that pessimism is a legitimate development of atheism, but is entirely incompatible with theism and especially with Christianity. It is the reduction of atheism to absurdity. It is a confirmation of theism by showing that theism is essential to avoid this absurdity and to any reasonable conception of man and of the universe. And this is a decisive answer to the argument against the existence of God from the existence of suffering and sin.

VI. Mystery. — We are justified in trusting that God is love, in the face of questions which we cannot answer and difficulties which we cannot remove. It is a false assumption that candor and fairness in investigation forbid our believing any religious doctrine and directing our action by it until we have definitely refuted all objections and solved all difficulties. Almost all human knowledge is held in the face of unanswered objections and unexplained difficulties. This is true of physical science. But the scientist does not give up the knowledge which he has attained, nor his confidence that the universe is constituted in accordance with reason and is in all its parts susceptible of being scientifically known.[1] The energies of practical life would be paralyzed if we

[1] In a letter to the late Dean of Wells, Ap. 27, 1877, Mr. Huxley says: "I have not the slightest objection to offer *a priori* to all the propositions in the three creeds. The mysteries of the church are child's play compared with the mysteries of nature. The doctrine of the Trinity is not more puzzling than the necessary antinomies of physical speculation; virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist. It would be a great error, therefore, to suppose that the

waited till all objections were answered. We trust to what we do know and go forward. The same is true in the moral and spiritual sphere. The theodicy sublimely set forth in the book of Job rests on God's transcendent greatness and the consequent imperfection of human knowledge of him. Therefore there may always be in his wisdom and love reasons for his action not yet known to us. Thus our faith in him is justified and "when we do not know the reasons of his doing, we trust the reasonableness of the doer." We have already reached a position which justifies this faith in God. And we reasonably expect that the future, as it unrolls to our view, will be a progressive revelation of the reasons of God's doings and a progressive vindication of his perfections; that what we know not now we shall know hereafter (John xiii. 7). This hope is poetically expressed by James Blanco White:

> "Mysterious Night, when our first parent knew
> Thee by report divine and heard thy name,
> Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
> This glorious canopy of light and blue?
> Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
> Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
> Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
> And lo, creation widened to man's view.
> Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
> Within thy beams, O Sun? Or who could find,
> While fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
> That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
> Why do we then shun death with anxious strife?
> If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life?"

Because God is the absolute Being, agnostics affirm that he is unknowable. Others, because God is personal Spirit, affirm that Christianity should not be represented as full of mysteries, and assume that they can present a doctrine of God plain to all minds. They thus stop in anthropomorphism and incur the divine rebuke, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself" (Ps. l. 21). Each of these parties presents one aspect of what God reveals himself to be, which, held as the comprehensive whole, becomes fatal error. Theism affirms the knowledge of God in both these aspects as the absolute Spirit,

agnostic rejects theology because of its puzzles and wonders. He rejects it simply because in his judgment there would be no evidence sufficient to warrant theological propositions."

"with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13). Yet it affirms that our knowledge of him is always incomplete. We say, with Paul, "we know in part." We say, with Job, of the grandest revelations of God in nature, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways; how small a whisper do we hear of him!" (1 Cor. xiii. 9; Job xxvi. 14).

We have seen that God, considered in the aspect of his being as the absolute One, must always be mysterious to finite minds. The following explanations will answer some common objections and correct some common misapprehensions or misrepresentations.

1. The mysteriousness of God as the absolute Being does not require belief of the absurd, self-contradictory, or impossible.

A mystery is not an absurdity or self-contradiction. That two and two make five, that a circle exists with the radii unequal, that anything can be and not be at the same time, are not mysteries, but are clearly known in all human intelligence as absurdities.

The discoveries of science and the inventions of art have made us familiar with believing what had been contrary to universal experience and all men had believed to be impossible. When the earth was regarded as flat, and the law of gravitation was not known, the existence of antipodes was necessarily regarded as impossible. But with the progress of science the existence of antipodes, which had been universally believed to be impossible, came to be universally and familiarly known. After steam navigation had begun, it was still believed to be impossible for a ship to be propelled by steam across the ocean. One writer published an essay demonstrating mathematically, as he supposed, this impossibility. But in the very week in which it was published the first steamship steamed into New York harbor, having completed its voyage across the Atlantic. So discovery and invention in their continued progress have been continually compelling men to believe what had been contrary to universal experience and all men had regarded as impossible. We have become so familiar with this that, when a new discovery or invention is suggested, we are almost ready to believe it because it seems impossible. So, in the evolution of the universe from epoch to epoch, God brings in new and higher orders of beings, such as before were unknown and seemingly impossible. Therefore it is not strange nor improbable that in his action among men in

redemption he should from epoch to epoch manifest himself in higher and higher forms of revelation, and that there should be epochs marked by what we call the miraculous, until he comes in Christ, the revelation transcending all that had preceded it. This is not impossible, because we know that the universe is grounded in the absolute reason eternal in God, who reveals himself by progressively realizing in it the archetype of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason. Therefore, that which transcends previous human experience is possible; but that which true reason clearly sees to be absurd, that which cannot be realized without annulling the eternal principles of reason, is impossible. An absurdity, clearly seen as such in the light of reason, is not a mystery.

Tertullian said: "The Son of God was crucified; this awakens no shame, because it is shameful, as all men must see. The Son of God died; this is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd (*ineptum*). He was buried and rose again; this is certain because it is impossible." [1] This is mere extravagant rhetoric. Yet in the course of theological thought through the ages this rhetoric has sometimes been propounded by Christian teachers as an axiom in theology. And to this day some authors quietly take it for granted that Christian theology accepts this as a fundamental maxim on which the truth of Christianity depends, and teaches that the more glaring the apparent contradiction in any alleged revelation of God, and the greater the difficulty of reconciling it with reason, the stronger and more commendable is the faith in believing it. Mr. Mallock, in his "Is Life Worth Living?" is a notable example. Another writer has recently said, "The strongest and subtlest difficulty that meets the Christian preacher . . . is the common idea that Christianity involves absurdities or violates our native sense of right."

But it is of the essence of theism that the absolute Being is the absolute Reason; that the universe is grounded ultimately in Reason, and in all its ongoing is the revelation of the absolute Reason energizing in it. Theism, therefore, is accordant with true science in holding that whatever is real is rationally explicable and intelligible; that an absurdity is as impossible in reality as it is in thought — as impossible to be made real by causal en-

[1] De Carne Christi, chap. v.

ergy even though almighty, as it is to be assented to as true by the rational intellect. Theism, in fact, discloses the only basis on which science, empirical or philosophical, can rest in holding this maxim. Theism, therefore, in its essence, is in irreconcilable contradiction to the assertion, We believe because it is impossible.

The same is the essence of Christianity. In Christ, the Logos, the eternal Reason, the Light that lighteth every man, is come into the world. In him is Truth and no lie. In him the absolute and perfect Reason is energizing to reconcile the world to himself — that is, to perfect reason. It is energizing to establish his kingdom, the reign of righteousness and good-will on earth, thereby progressively revealing, in the action of perfect love, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him. Therefore there cannot be anything absurd or self-contradictory in Christian theism rightly understood. But as, in the progress of civilization, we have become familiar with discoveries in science and inventions in art which had been unprecedented and seemingly impossible, but now are known to be real and scientifically accordant with the principles, laws, and ideals of reason, so in theology we may be assured that, while no revelation of God can annul or contradict any principle or law of reason, God's revelation of himself may be expected to disclose reality which had been previously unknown and seemingly impossible, and which, when revealed is found to be accordant with reason and of practical worth in promoting the spiritual and moral progress of individuals and of society.

2. The mysteriousness of God as the absolute Being does not justify agnosticism.

A mystery is not something entirely unknown and unintelligible. Mr. Lewes, speaking of the possible ultimate reconciliation of science and religion, says: "But to do this, in the coming ages it (religion) must occupy a position similar to the one it occupied in the past, and express the highest thought of the time, as that thought widens with the ever-growing experience. . . . It must no longer put forward principles which are unintelligible and incredible, nor make this very unintelligibility a source of glory, and a belief in them a higher virtue than a belief in demonstration."[1] Here is a complete misapprehension. The mysteries disclosed in theism and Christianity are not totally unintelligible

[1] Problems of Life and Mind, First Series, vol. i. pp. 2, 3.

and incredible; theology asserts no merit in believing them as such.

A mystery is not our subjective feeling — our sense of the mysterious. It is the object or reality which awakens this feeling. But if the object is entirely unknown it cannot present itself in consciousness nor awaken the sense of the mysterious. In fact, a mystery, in its very essence as such, implies knowledge of the mysterious object. It implies knowledge of the object as existing, and some knowledge of what it is, and the knowledge of limitations which at present the person cannot transcend. The fact that I ask questions which I cannot answer implies positive knowledge of the object. I cannot ask questions about that of which I have no knowledge. Ignorance itself implies knowledge. I can be conscious of ignorance only as I am conscious of knowledge and conscious that the knowledge is limited. Accordingly all the reasoning of Spencerian agnostics about the Unknowable implicitly assumes a knowledge of the Unknowable. In the solar spectrum there is always an invisible actinic ray beyond the visible light. The knowledge of the mysterious and incomprehensible is the actinic ray in all knowledge. I must know something of a being in order to know that it is incomprehensible.[1] While we have positive knowledge of the mysterious object, we are conscious of limits to our knowledge beyond which at present we cannot pass.

An object is not a mystery because it is inconceivable, that is, not capable of being pictured in the imagination, provided it can be apprehended in thought. Such, for example, are abstract general notions, as humanity, virtue, color. They are clearly apprehended in thought, but they are inconceivable in the sense that they cannot be pictured in the imagination as abstract, but only as some quality, power, or other mode of existence of a being. A large part of the reasoning of agnostics is fallacious through overlooking this simple distinction and confounding the inconceivable with the unknowable.

The consciousness of mere ignorance or limitation of knowl-

[1] In the Unitarian controversy a mystery was often defined as a proposition stated in unintelligible terms. It was said, "A mystery is a proposition stated in terms to which no distinct ideas are annexed." This is simply saying that a mystery is jargon. But jargon cannot be a mystery, for the very reason that it conveys no idea to the mind. — "Yates' Reply to Wardlaw," pp. 45, 142–145.

edge does not necessarily imply a mystery. I may be ignorant who lives in a house across the street. But it is not a mystery, because I can find out by looking in the directory. A mystery implies a consciousness of limitation of knowledge which, in the use of all accessible means of knowledge, cannot be removed. An object may be a mystery in this sense because it can be but partially observed, or because, while known as a fact by observation, it is inexplicable, — that is, it cannot be accounted for by ascertaining its cause, or its rational significance, law, or end. Thus, realities known indisputably as facts may present apparent contradictions. The ancients, supposing the earth to be flat and the tendency of all things to be downward, believed the existence of antipodes to be absurd and impossible. A child, as it rides along, wonders that the rising moon accompanies it. The axis of the earth, while never changing its inclination, always points to the North Star, though at the summer solstice it is more than 180,000,000 of miles from its position six months before. These are not only mysteries but absurdities, the facts being as supposed. The more complete knowledge of the facts removes both the apparent absurdity and the mystery. The mystery of one generation is removed by the science of the next. In the progress of knowledge the line of the mysterious recedes and the area of clear knowledge becomes larger. Science rests on the axiom that whatever is real in the finite universe which science investigates is intelligible and explicable to the reason. It only needs further opportunity for observation, or greater intellectual resources and powers to know and explain them. In the night the whole world seems buried in darkness. But the darkness is but the conical shadow of the earth projected into the all-encompassing light.

God, as the absolute Being, must always transcend human knowledge; yet, as the absolute Spirit, he is knowable, and finite minds may be always advancing in the knowledge of him. A mystery, therefore, is always an object known, but with the consciousness of limits which, with our present opportunities, resources, and powers, we cannot transcend. Both of these elements of the mysterious in our knowledge of God are expressed in lines of the Russian poet Derzhavin, translated by Sir John Bowring. It is said that they have been translated also into Chinese, Japanese, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Italian, and German.

"O Thou Eternal One, whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motions guide,
Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight!
Thou only God; there is no God beside!
Being above all beings! Mighty One,
Whom none can comprehend and none explore,
Who fill'st existence with thyself alone,
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er,
Being whom we call God, and know no more . . .
God! thus alone my lowly thoughts can soar,
Midst thy vast works admire, obey, adore;
And when the tongue is eloquent no more,
The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude."

3. Because God is the absolute Being, every true revelation of him as Spirit must reveal also the mystery of his being as the absolute. Agnosticism fancies that because God is a mystery he cannot be known; anthropomorphism fancies that because God is known he cannot be a mystery. But a revelation without mystery would be a God revealed away, and therefore no God. To every finite mind the knowledge of God shines on a background of mystery, like lightning on the blackness of a cloud. This is true of God's revelation of himself in nature and in man. The lily is clothed with mystery not less than with beauty. Every pebble, every blade of grass, every insect, brings us, as we investigate it, to questions which man cannot answer, which carry our thought to the absolute and the infinite. Consciousness can take no cognizance of its own origin, and thought can give no proof of the ultimate principles by which all thinking is regulated. Both the beginning and the end of the thread of man's consciousness are beyond his grasp. Thus all things go out into mystery, and therein all things reveal the absolute Being, and this is God.

And no enlargement of the revelation can clear away the mystery. Because it is the absolute Being that is revealed, the more fully he is revealed the more fully must we see the mystery of the absolute Being. Because it is the finite in which he reveals himself, the finite can never be commensurate with the infinite and the completed revelation of it. Because it is finite minds to whom God reveals himself, the revelation must be commensurate with the capacity of the recipient, and the apprehension of God by a finite mind can never be the full comprehension of him. Therefore no enlargement of the revelation can clear it of mystery. God's progressive revelation of himself, however far

it may be advanced, must always be the revelation of himself as the absolute Being transcending all finite media of revelation and the largest capacity of a finite mind. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job xi. 7-9).

On the contrary, the greater the revelation, the greater the consciousness of the mystery revealed. Science aims to clear from obscurity an area of knowledge. But the larger the clear area, the larger the horizon of the unknown which bounds it. The telescope penetrates the depths of space and reveals to scientific knowledge innumerable suns and systems. But the extension of knowledge multiplies the questions which we must ask but cannot answer — questions which could not have been asked when the firmament was only an expanse dotted with shining spangles. The microscope reveals the invisible; chemistry discloses the molecular constitution of bodies. But the unanswered questions are multiplied, questions which could not have been asked when there were supposed to be but four elements, fire, air, earth, and water. It is like entering a spacious hall with locked doors on every side which we long to enter. If one is opened we find another more spacious hall with its locked doors. As the ancients imagined the earth to be flat and surrounded by an ocean overhung with everlasting darkness, the sphere of human knowledge is encircled on every side by the unknowable, whose waves we hear rolling beneath the impenetrable night. And human knowledge is thus encompassed by the darkness visible of conscious ignorance, because the universe is embosomed in the absolute Reason, whose eternal light, broken and reflected in the finite universe, reveals him to us, but, in its infinite, unbroken, and all-encompassing brightness, blinds us with excess of light.

The same principle is exemplified in the revelation of God in Christ. A recent writer carries his anthropomorphism so far that he says Christ never presented truth transcending the limits of the human mind. He quotes our Lord's words on the new birth, in the third chapter of John, as exemplifying this transparent simplicity. But this very declaration of Jesus was a mystery to Nicodemus. And Jesus, as if laying the foundation of the

Baconian philosophy, rebukes Nicodemus because he does not first ascertain the fact before objecting to it that he does not see the how, the why, and the wherefore of it; and he enforces his rebuke by referring to the undisputed fact of the changes of the wind, which at that day were entirely inexplicable. While no revealer of God ever disclosed to human view vistas opening so widely and so far into the grandeur and glory of the divine as are disclosed in the life and teaching of Jesus, certainly no one has revealed more of the mystery of God which encompasses and transcends those opening vistas. His revelations awaken innumerable questions which a fetichist or a polytheist could never have asked.

In this sense it is always true that the more a man knows the more conscious he is of his ignorance. It is not that he believes that he has less knowledge, for he knows that his knowledge is increased. It means only that by the increase of his knowledge the horizon of the visible unknown is enlarged, and the points of as yet unsatisfied inquiry and investigation multiplied.

It follows that any alleged revelation of God or any system of theology which makes its boast that it is free from mystery is thereby proved not to be true. If revelation is a chain let down from the throne of God, it must ascend beyond my reach and sight. If I can see and handle it up to the staple in the beam on which it hangs, I know it does not descend from the throne of God. If I can dip up the whole of a quantity of water in a tea-cup, it proves that the water is not the ocean. If I can fully comprehend in my finite mind a God revealed, it proves that it is not a revelation of the true God. Any professed revelation of God which boasts that it prunes away all mystery, and teaches only what is level to human capacity and transparent to the human mind, is by that fact proved to be not a revelation of the true God. It is a God whom I can handle and turn over in my own mind and look at on every side, as I might a statue of Apollo. It is an idol, an image created by my mind, if not graven by my hand.

In this sense, and not in the sense of agnosticism, are the sayings true: "A God understood would be no God"; "To think that God is as I can think him to be is blasphemy"; "The last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar to The Unknown God."

4. While God as the absolute Being is the greatest of all mysteries, as the absolute Spirit in whom reason is eternal he is the solution of all. God cannot be accounted for by reference to any cause, nor explained by relation to any being or to any rational principle, law, or end, independent of himself. He is utterly inexplicable. But he is himself the absolute Spirit, the eternal Reason, the source of all causal energy and of all principles, laws, perfection, and good. Thus he accounts for and explains all things. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Light cannot be illuminated, but it illuminates all things.

Physical science, as it pushes its investigations to the utmost, finds itself confronted with questions which it cannot answer, with breaks in the law of continuity which it cannot bridge, and even with seeming contradictions which it cannot resolve. It is only as it recognizes that the universe is grounded in the absolute Reason, ever immanent and energizing in it, that its ultimate questions can be answered, its law of continuity preserved, its fundamental axioms justified, and its seeming contradictions resolved. Philosophical science also issues in contradictions or antinomies if there is no God. Here, also, if God, the absolute Reason, is immanent and active in the universe, the contradictions are resolved into complemental truths. Thus the very existence of empirical and philosophical science rests on the existence of God, the absolute Reason, and his progressive revelation of his eternal and archetypal thought in it. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep." And God said, Let light be, and light was. And it is only because he speaks his all-creating and all-ordering word that light and order have appeared, that the universe is the expression of the thought of perfect reason, and so is capable of being comprehended in science, and that thus, instead of chaos, we have a cosmos. Clouds and darkness are round about him, but they are gathered up from the face of the universe, leaving it in light.

5. The revelation of the mystery of the divine Being is essential to the religious or spiritual life and its practical efficiency in renovating mankind.

The revelation of this mystery is itself the revelation of God as the absolute Being. An essential element of religion is a consciousness, however inadequate, of the absolute Being and of having to do with him. It is a consciousness of the mystery

behind all phenomena, and revealing itself in them. The object of religious faith is not the material world, it is not man, it is not the universe. It is the Power behind them all, and revealed in them all. It is the absolute Power, revealed also as the absolute Reason, as the absolute and eternal Life, Wisdom, and Love. And because the absolute transcends the finite it must always be a mystery to a finite mind. If man's knowledge cannot reach above the finite, if there is no Power, no rational Spirit, no Wisdom and Love, above the fixed course of nature and the finiteness of man, then man is incapable of religion. Then there is nothing by which he can lift himself above the finite and the transitory and connect himself and his destiny with the Absolute, the All-perfect, and the Eternal. Then he cannot know himself in his true greatness as a rational and free child of God. He cannot know the true ideal of his own perfection and well-being, and must forever fail to realize it. It is of the essence of religion that the man recognize his connection with that which transcends the finite; that he know his life, his duty, and his privilege, as in communication with God and participating in the Life, the Light, and the Love which are in him, and from him are imparted to men. Otherwise the man, in the world but without hope, finds himself, as Hegel says, stranded "on the sand-bank of the temporal."[1] And whatever is substituted as the object of a proposed religion without God, the absolute Being, is itself finite, and cannot lift the soul on the waters of eternal life, which flow only from the sanctuary of God.

The revelation of the mystery of God brings home to our consciousness the fact that, however near to us God may be, however gracious, to whatever intimacy with himself he may admit us, he is not altogether such a one as ourselves, but is the absolute Being, transcending us and the universe in his incomprehensible greatness. The revelation of mystery keeps fresh within us the consciousness that we are related to something above the earthly, the material and the finite, that our lives are lifted above sense into fellowship with the eternal, the infinite, the divine. It is often said that ignorance is the mother of devotion. But the wonder of knowledge is greater than the wonder of ignorance. It is the presence of mystery, ever greatening in the background of our ever greatening knowledge

[1] Phil. der Religion, Einleitung.

which keeps the religious consciousness alive, nourishes perennially the awe and reverence which are essential elements of religion, and makes men always aware of their relations and obligations to God. Great mysteries are like the great mountains, so high that the foot of man never trod their shining summits and the very attempt to climb their precipitous and icy sides is full of peril. But for the very reason that they are so high they condense the moisture of the heavens and pour it forth in springs and streams which make the earth inhabitable by man. So the springs of religious and spiritual influences, which with living water flow forth in humanity to everlasting life, arise in the mountain mystery of God, whose summit speculative thought strives in vain and with peril to surmount. The complaint that the revelation of God is full of mystery is analogous to the complaint that so large a part of the earth is occupied by barren and uninhabitable mountains. If the mountains and hills were all sunk to a plain the earth would become one vast uninhabitable swamp. And if there were no mystery towering above the finite to the eternal and the absolute, human life, unable to lift itself to the divine, would sink into a morass of sensuousness and bestiality.

6. It is possible for man to be forever advancing in the knowledge of God and receptive of his progressive revelation of himself. While the knowledge of God as the absolute by a finite person must always be bounded by a horizon of mystery, God's revelation of himself as the absolute Spirit and man's knowledge of him thereby may be always progressive. A finite man can never comprehend the infinite God to perfection. But God is continually revealing himself more and more in nature and in man, in Christ, his Spirit, and his kingdom; and man is evermore in the process of education and development to a larger capacity and a more full acquaintance with God. And this progressive revelation and knowledge may go on forever. Humboldt describes the delight with which he first saw the Southern Cross rising above the horizon. Archimedes shouted with exultation when he discovered the method of ascertaining specific gravity. Kepler uttered the solemn ecstasy with which in his discoveries he read God's thoughts after him. Luther leaped with joy when, climbing on his knees Pilate's stairs, the saving truth of justification by faith flashed on him. So, through

all the future, new truths may be rising above the horizon and taking their places in the firmament of thought; new discoveries of God's wisdom in the physical system may thrill the soul; and new insight may be given into the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. In walking or riding one receives continually a gentle stimulus and pleasure from the new scenes as they are continuously coming into view. So, in the future life, joy may be perpetually welling up as new glories successively present themselves in our endless progress. And we may anticipate a higher strain of life there. Ecstasy, experienced here only on rare and great occasions, and which the human body could not continuously support, may be the common tone of the blessedness of that life, and the ecstasy of its sublimer epochs such as we cannot now conceive.

7. We may, therefore, maintain equanimity and peace of mind in the presence of the mystery inseparable from our knowledge of God in his transcendence as absolute Being, and may use the clear knowledge of him, which we have through his revelation of himself as Spirit, in the practical work of the life of Christlike love, seeking to advance the kingdom of God both in extent throughout the world and in intensity in the more full development of the spiritual life of universal love both in the individual and in society.

This does not mean that we are to cease from all endeavor to increase our knowledge of God or to correct prevalent errors. On the contrary, we have seen that the fact that God always transcends the limits of our finite knowledge opens to us the prospect of endless progress in the knowledge of him and of his revelation of himself in his never-ceasing action in the universe. It meets us always with our Saviour's words, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter. I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth." Therefore in the face of questions which we cannot answer, and doubts and difficulties which as yet we cannot resolve, we may retain our equanimity in the assurance of truth to be discovered as well as of truth already known.

Here we meet the error that the progressiveness of theological belief is incompatible with the reality of knowledge. The open

mind seeking truth and welcoming every new discovery of it is often so described as to imply that all belief is uncertain, and that real knowledge is impossible. Even Christian writers, defending the progressiveness of theology, sometimes use language implying that no questions can ever be finally settled, and that any fixed belief is unjustifiable and real knowledge impossible. For example, a prominent religious journal, in a recent number, says: "If there is to be no dead line in life, there must be no closing of the mind, no day when we shall stop and say of any position which we have taken or any method which we have adopted, This is final; nothing shall induce me to change it." We ask with astonishment, May we not say it is finally settled that two and two make four, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, that the laws of continuity, uniformity, and non-contradiction on which all science rests are true, that the law of gravitation is established, that the law of love will never be annulled? And yet all this is certainly implied in the sentence quoted. It plainly teaches universal skepticism. The progress of knowledge does not annul our knowledge; it only clarifies and enlarges it. [1]

But when once it is admitted that real knowledge is possible to man, then no limits can be assigned *a priori* to the amount of knowledge attainable by him in the progressive acquisitions of successive generations, or by the individual in his progress in the life immortal. And we may reasonably suppose that the Christian has attained real knowledge of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; that in the life, the intellectual activity, and the practical experience and work of the church through the ages, guided and quickened by the continuous influence of God's Spirit, the Christian may consider some truths established on which he can rest his whole character, conduct, and destiny, to the propagation of which and their application to life he gladly and undoubtingly consecrates all his energies, in faith in which he expects to die in peace and to enter the life eternal, and for the maintenance of which, if necessary, he would willingly give up his life. And to the Christian such a faith is not merely the result of testimony or of reasoning, but of experience in communion with God. So John teaches: "And as for you, the anointing which ye received from him abideth in you, and ye

[1] See "Philosophical Basis of Theism," pp. 36-43.

need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him" (1 John ii. 27). But a person who is living in supreme selfishness, closes his soul against God's Spirit, and refuses and shuts out the divine influence. He therefore cannot be "taught of God." He even "cannot see the kingdom of God."

Therefore, in the progress of Christian knowledge the change is not in our belief in the existence of God perfect in wisdom and love, in the facts of sin and of God's redeeming grace in Christ, the forgiveness of sin, the continued presence and influence of God's Spirit, the kingdom of Christ on earth, and other facts and truths essential to the Christian life. The change is in the clearness and fulness of the apprehension of these facts and truths in their real significance, in the formulating of them in words, in the attempts to account for and explain them philosophically, in the relative emphasis put upon them, in the perception of their harmony and unity in a system, in the application of them to the varying conditions of society and the advance of civilization, in the enlargement of scientific, historical, and philosophical knowledge, opening new aspects of the significance of God's revelation of himself and of his relations to man and to the universe; and all this under the continued illumination and quickening by the Holy Spirit. God is the same. But both his revelation of himself and man's understanding of it are progressive.

Skepticism in its better meaning is simply the spirit of inquiry. This is always active in the right-minded Christian eager to increase his knowledge of God. But it must not displace, it must brighten and intensify, that fixed faith in the God in Christ which is the only true spring of Christian hope, enthusiasm and energy. Skepticism criticises, questions, and doubts. Faith believes, emboldens, inspires, enkindles to energy. All great epochs are epochs, not of criticism, doubt, and negation, but of overcoming faith. But when energy is enfeebled, when eagerness for knowledge has ceased, when utterance has degenerated into cant and service into formalism, when the Christian life has sunk into "the muddy pools of tradition and conformity," already mantling with the greenness of stagnation, then it is the function of skepticism, the spirit of inquiry, to search for what has stopped the flow of living water, to seek anew for its hidden

springs and to open them that from them it may spring up anew unto eternal life (John iv. 14); as Isaac opened the wells of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had filled up with earth.

Therefore it is evident that there is no force in the common objection that because God has made a revelation of himself, that revelation must be an impassable barrier against all progress in theological knowledge. The progress is in ascertaining more and more what God is as thus revealed, and what are his real relations to the universe, and especially to man. The sun, the planets, the stars, and the earth have been revealing themselves to man from the beginning. But his progress in apprehending what they are as revealed has been exceedingly slow. Much more may his knowledge of what God is as revealed be progressive. And not only is man's knowledge progressive in comprehending the significance and applications of God's revelation after it is made, but also God's revelation of himself is itself progressive in his action in the course of human history redeeming man from sin and establishing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will, — action culminating in Christ and continued through all subsequent generations of men in the Holy Spirit abiding with men as a power of illumination, renovation, and spiritual development. The significance of such a revelation may well be studied from generation to generation without exhausting all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in Christ. It must be added that God's peculiar and pre-eminent revelation of himself, in bringing in the Christ and the redemption of men, and perpetuated in the Holy Spirit, was accompanied throughout, and, as it were, encompassed by his broader but less clear and full revelation of himself in the constitution and evolution of the universe and in the constitution of man and his history outside of that recorded in the Bible. Nor did this revelation cease when Christ came, but it went on as it had done from the beginning. But since Christ came it has attracted less attention, as the moon and stars shine, though little noticed, in the daylight of the sun. Therefore it is not surprising that the increasing knowledge of the constitution and evolution of the physical system and of the constitution and history of man adds to our knowledge of God and his relation to the universe, and helps us better to understand the significance of God's revelation of himself in Christ. Of this a striking exemplification is found in reading the Hexaemeron of Basil the

Great — homilies on the account of the creation of the universe in the first chapter of Genesis, written in accordance with the best science of the time — and the treatment of the same subject in the light of modern science.

Since we have positive though incomplete knowledge of God, we should use that knowledge in the practical work of life; we should not waste our strength in fruitless speculation about mysteries which we are unable to solve. We can use the daylight though we cannot gaze on the sun. It is useless to stand precariously on the slippery rocks of the sea-shore, straining our eyes upon the misty ocean and lamenting that the continent is hemmed in by surging waters, while inland are the fertile fields and the happy homes of men. Equally futile is it to neglect the practical work and blessedness of the Christian life and waste our strength in waiting till by speculative thinking we can penetrate the mysteries of God which encompass us, and answer every perplexing question. This restlessness under the essential limits of our being are not marks of greatness of mind. The real strength is shown when before the mystery of God we have learned to be ignorant with equanimity. And it is by using our knowledge in the practical work of Christian love and service, that we gain larger and clearer knowledge of God. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God." "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." We study most effectively when we turn truth into life. We advance most rapidly and broadly in the knowledge of God when we seek it as the guide of life and the revelation of the divine and gracious power which is to renovate the world and to transform society into the kingdom of Christ. Then we discover the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge which we are to use in our Christian work in advancing his kingdom, and find ourselves able to "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us." Then in the presence of the impenetrable mystery, where we cannot know, we trust and adore, assured that the mystery is but the covering of wisdom and love which are to be revealed in their season. Thus restlessness, impatience and despair, in view of our limitations, cease, and we rest and are at peace in the consciousness of God's all-encompassing love, knowing —

> "That every cloud that spreads above
> And veileth love, itself is love."

Accordingly Richard Baxter says: "Avoid disputes about lesser truths and a religion that lies only in opinions. They are usually least acquainted with a heavenly life who are violent disputers about the circumstantials of religion. He whose religion is all in his opinions will be most frequently and zealously speaking his opinions; and he whose religion lies in his knowledge and love of Christ will be most delightfully speaking of that happy time when he shall enjoy them. He is a rare and precious Christian who is skilful to improve well-known truths. Therefore, let me advise you who aspire after a heavenly life, not to spend too much of your thoughts, your time, your zeal, or your speech upon disputes that less concern your souls; but when hypocrites are feeding on husks and shells, do you feed on the joys above. I would have the chief truths to be chiefly studied, and none to cast out your thought of eternity."

The conclusion must be that objections founded on ignorance are of no validity against evidence founded on knowledge; objections founded on the limitation of knowledge are of no validity against the knowledge. If we study a blade of grass or a grain of sand, we come to questions which we cannot answer, to realities which we cannot explore. All human knowledge abuts on the unknown; knowledge of the unknown can be attained only as we reach it from reality already known. Often a doubt or objection may be removed by ceasing to think about it and attending to the work of the life of Christian love. Then, in the enlargement of knowledge, and in the process of intellectual and spiritual growth and development, you outgrow it; when you look for it again you see beyond and around it, and the doubt or difficulty is gone. The habit of dwelling on doubts, objections, and negations in any sphere of knowledge closes the shutters of the mind, excludes the light of truth, checks intellectual, moral and spiritual growth, and tends to universal skepticism as its legitimate issue. A small coin held close to the eye, shuts out the whole landscape, and a petty objection continuously dwelt on may shut out the vision of God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRINITY: — THE BIBLICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST

ATTEMPTS to define and formulate the doctrines of the person of Christ and of the Trinity began very early in the Christian churches; and from that time till now controversies on questions pertaining to these subjects have been of frequent occurrence and long continuance. Usually, however, these have not been discussions of the elements of these doctrines as set forth by Christ and his apostles in their practical bearing on the religious and spiritual life, but of attempted metaphysical and ontological definitions of the internal constitution of God and of the union of the divine and human in the person of Christ. In marked contrast with this we find that, through it all, the Christian faith in the God in Christ and in the Trinity as revealed in the Bible to the religious consciousness, is constant, persistent, and effective, quickening and inspiring the highest spiritual life. These contrasted facts force on us several important practical conclusions which we must note in the outset and accept as guides in all our investigations.

The conception of God and of his relation to man and the universe involved in the Trinity and in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, as presented in the Bible and received in the religious consciousness of men, carries in it peculiar elements of truth and spiritual power. During all the centuries since Christ, God as thus revealed has been the common object of Christian faith, worship and service and the vitalizing and sustaining power of the Christian life. This conception of God and of his relations to man is distinctive of Christianity. As Neander says of the Trinity, as presupposed in the fundamental fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself: "We recognize therein the essential contents of Christianity summed up in brief."[1] It is a necessary

[1] History of the Christian Religion and Church; Torrey's trans., vol. i. p. 572.

conclusion that, whatever may be the speculative difficulties in formulating the doctrine, there are in it elements of truth and reality indispensable to the distinctive and pre-eminent spiritual power of Christianity and thus essential in the conception of God, the most worthy in itself and the most effective in renovating man and in quickening and developing the spiritual life of faith and love, which the human mind has ever attained.

It is equally necessary to conclude that it is a waste of intellect to attempt to pass beyond the line which divides the finite from the absolute and infinite, and from that transcendent position to define metaphysically the exact mode of God's eternal and absolute being within himself, further than he has made himself known to us in his action. It is an attempt to transcend ourselves. The controversies incident to such attempts have sometimes been marked with great bitterness and have often degenerated into logomachy. John C. Doederlein, as he opens this topic in his "Institutio Theologiæ Christianæ" [A. D. 1780], says: "We have reached a field which we have long been dreading, ample for crops, yet sown and tangled with briers the seeds of which have been sown broadcast by the fruitful ingenuity of theologians and nourished by the heats of councils and synods mingled with the tempests of anathemas; crops which many good men seem to think ought to be cut down, or, if the sacred thicket must be spared, abandoned to theologians to cultivate it." He says the metaphysical refinements as to the constitution of the person of Christ were fit machinations to create heresies, and felicitates antiquity, when "the fowlers after heresies were not yet on the watch to shoot the unwary."[1] It is reasonable to suppose it settled by the long and weary history of these controversies, that it transcends the powers of the human mind to construct, beyond God's clear revelation of himself, an exact and all-comprehending formula of his internal constitution, of the mode of his existence therein, or of the union of the divine and the human in the God in Christ, the Word that became flesh and tabernacled among us. The witty Dr. Robert South says, in a sermon on the Trinity: "As he that denies it may lose his soul; so he that too much strives to understand it may lose his wits."[2]

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 333, 332, 240.
[2] Works, vol. ii. p. 184, Ed. Philadelphia, 1844.

Theologians are not to be blamed for entering on these investigations. Man as a rational being must use his reason. He must think and try to attain clear ideas; he must examine in the light of reason whatever he is asked to believe, and test it by rational truths, laws, ideals, and ends; he must ascertain the limits of the human mind, learn what is revealed of God and where are the impassable barriers beyond which it is useless to attempt to pass. When God had made his great revelation of himself in Christ, neglect to study it and to learn all which can be known of God through it would have been dishonoring both God and his revelation, and man and the reason with which God has endowed him. Rightly, therefore, the searchers after God "went sounding on their dim and perilous way" among the narrows and the shallows of the finite to find channels through which they could safely navigate out into the ocean of God's infinitude. They have thus indicated as on a chart the reefs barring all passage and the seemingly open straits which end without an outlet. If their successors have erred, it has been in not noting their discoveries, and in trying anew the reefs and inlets which again and again have been found impassable. Mystery must always lie all along the line at which the absolute and infinite reveals itself in the finite.

From the history of thought on this subject we learn another principle to guide in our investigations: that in seeking to know God in Christ and as the Trinity we must follow the order of his revelation of himself in Christ as recorded in the Bible. We must begin with the elements of these doctrines not reduced to formulas and system; we must receive them in their practical, moral, and spiritual significance; we must know them by experiencing their light, warmth, and vitalizing power in our own hearts and lives. Then as rational beings we should trace them back as far as we can into the heart and mind of God and thus ascertain all that God in them has revealed himself to be in himself and in his relation to man. This is the way in which God historically revealed himself in Christ and as the Trinity. This is the way in which the Church first studied the revelation and learned its significance — the only way in which we can know all that can be known of God as thus revealed.

The history of Christian thought shows also that the great objection urged against these doctrines is not that they are

unscriptural, but that they are unreasonable. Certainly we cannot accept, on the authority of a supposed revelation of God, any doctrine which contradicts the necessary principles and laws of reason, or which is incompatible with the universal law of love. We therefore remove the most important objections against these doctrines when we show that speculative opinions on which these objections rest are not essential to the doctrines, and that there is nothing in the doctrines, rightly understood, which is either absurd or contrary to the moral law. In fact, it is the revelation of God set forth in these doctrines which gives us the deepest, clearest, and largest insight into his being, and his relations to man and the universe. For this very reason it, more than any other revelation, enlarges the horizon of the unknowable which bounds our vision, and opens to our view the grandeur and mystery of God as the absolute Being.

The history also establishes the fact that the Christian church has always embraced in its fellowship theologians, preachers, and other thinkers differing in the formulation of their answers to speculative questions pertaining to the Trinity and the God in Christ, and in the reasons in support of the answers. Similar comprehensiveness is essential in all ages to the growth, harmony, and efficiency of the Christian church.

God is most clearly revealed as the Trinity in Christ and the redemption of men from sin through him. Therefore, in systems of theology the consideration of the doctrine is sometimes made introductory to the part treating distinctively of redemption. But the conception of God in Christ and as the Trinity is the Christian conception as distinguished from all polytheistic, pantheistic, deistic, and Mohammedan conceptions of him and of his relations to the universe. It necessarily modifies all theological doctrines. Therefore, it must be considered in the First Part of Doctrinal Theology, which presents the doctrine of God. This is necessary also, because in this Christian conception we have the most complete knowledge of God.

I shall first ascertain the scriptural elements of these doctrines and combine them into a unity of thought; then I shall consider their reasonableness and their practical significance.[1]

[1] The plan of this work does not permit a complete exhibition of the scriptural evidence, nor of the detailed processes of interpretation. This would require a volume entirely devoted to the subject. For the same

In Christ and his work of redemption God makes the clearest and fullest revelation of himself as the Trinity. We must begin with answering the question, "What think ye of Christ?" in order to answer intelligently what we think of God.

I. The Son of Man. — In the four gospels the phrase, "Son of man," used by Jesus to designate himself, appears seventy-eight times.[1] In the gospels there is no record of the application of this title to him by any disciple; and in the other apostolic writings it is found only in the words of Stephen immediately before his martyrdom, and in two passages in the Revelation. These remarkable facts indicate that the disciples were so impressed with something above humanity in Jesus while he lived, and with his heavenly majesty after his ascension, that they could not call him by this name; and that Jesus used it so freely to emphasize his real humanity, and perhaps also to intimate that he is by pre-eminence the man, — the Head of the new humanity, of men who, being born anew in a spiritual birth, become sons of God, are united in his kingdom, and realize the ideal perfection of their being.

In his life and death, as recorded in the gospels, he manifests all the common qualities of human nature, "yet without sin." Even after his ascension he is called man emphatically with reference to his redemptive work: "One mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus"; "God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained"; "In all things made like unto his brethren; tempted in all points like as we are."[2]

II. Pre-Existence and Humiliation. — A being is revealed in the Christ who had existed before his appearance in human form on earth. Jesus asserts that he had existed "before the world was." He says: "Before Abraham was, I am." His history shows that he was intimately acquainted with the Old

reason, in presenting the scriptural evidence, I adopt the topical method of systematic theology which concentrates on each topic the light from all sources, rather than the historical method of biblical theology which follows the historical progress of the revelation. And I shall not attempt a full presentation and exposition of the biblical teaching on the subject.

[1] See Thayer's "Grimm's Lexicon of the New Testament."

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 5; Acts xvii. 31; Heb. ii. 17, and iv. 15.

Testament, and deeply imbued with its spirit of reverence for God. Yet here he appropriates to himself the sublime name, I AM, by which Jehovah revealed himself to Moses. In this state preceding his earthly life he existed in glory with the Father. In prayer to God, Jesus himself speaks of "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." From this state of glory he humbled himself, and in Christ was revealed as the Son of man. Jesus said: "He that descended out of heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven." John says that the Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, "became flesh and dwelt (or tabernacled) among us." Paul describes it more fully: "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Here, in coming into humanity, he emptied himself; and after becoming man he humbled himself still further in obedience to God, even unto the death of the cross. Every man must die. Jesus is the only man who ever lived of whom it could be properly said that he humbled himself in becoming man and being obedient unto death. In allusion to this same emptying and humbling of himself Paul also says: "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."[1]

III. God in Christ. — The being who, in Christ, was manifested in the flesh, is God.

1. Names and titles of God are ascribed to him. In the first chapter of his gospel John declares that the Word, who became flesh, was in the beginning, was with God and was God. He emphasizes this by affirming, positively, that all things were made by him, and, negatively, that without him was not anything made that has been made; that in him was life, and the life was the light of men; and that in him of whom John the Baptist testified, the true light which lighteth every man was coming into the world. In the beginning of his first epistle he announces as his subject the Word of life. He proceeds to unfold the divine life and light and love flowing forth from him into humanity, and par-

[1] John viii. 58; xvii. 5; iii. 13; i. 1, 14; Phil. ii. 5–8; 2 Cor. viii. 9; also John vi. 62; viii. 14, 23; xvi. 28; xvii. 24.

ticipated in by men, whereby their fellowship is with the father, and with his son, Jesus Christ. Then he closes with the declaration: "This is the true God and eternal life." Years before writing his gospel, John, in apocalyptic vision, had seen the Lord Christ issuing from the open heaven with the hosts of his redeemed, and records that "his name is called the Word of God." This proves that John did not derive his idea of the Logos, or Word of God, after going to Ephesus, from the Greek philosophy of Alexandria. And in the first chapter of the Revelation he gives us the words of the glorified Christ: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." And Paul says of Christ: "who is over all God blessed forever"; and he declares that the essence of the gospel to be preached by those to whom God has given the ministry of reconciliation is, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." [1]

To these may be added the words of Paul: "The blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." This rendering in the version of 1881 is required by Greek usage; and is accordant with the apostle's use of the word "appearing," which he uses elsewhere to denote the expected second coming of the Lord. In like manner Peter speaks of "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." [2] That God is in Christ, is implied also in his own expressions of intimacy and union with the Father: "I and the Father are one"; "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." [3]

2. That God was in Christ, manifested in the flesh, is evident from the fact that works distinctive of God are ascribed to him.

Remarkable are Christ's own assertion and his reiteration and vindication of it against the Jews, recorded in the fifth chapter of John. At Bethesda, on the Sabbath, Jesus had healed a man who had been diseased thirty-eight years. Therefore the Jews persecuted him, declaring that he had violated the law. But Jesus justified his doing it by saying: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." That is, my Father does not suspend his working on the Sabbath; no more do I. The Jews then charged

[1] Rev. xix. 13; Rom. ix. 5; 2 Cor. v. 19.
[2] Titus ii. 13; 2 Peter i. 1.
[3] John x. 30 and xiv. 10. See also xvii. 7, 8, 10, 21.

him with "making himself equal with God," and therefore sought the more to kill him. If they had misunderstood him, then, as an honest man, he would have disclaimed the meaning attributed to his words. On the contrary, he reasserts and vindicates it. He asserts the closest intimacy with the Father and participation in all that he does: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." He proceeds to specify works of the Father in which he participates; in him is the divine and life-giving power of redemption; he is to be the judge of all men. And he affirms that these powers are exercised by him for the end "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." He then unfolds his meaning more fully. The hour is already come in which the redemptive energy, quickening to spiritual life, has in him come into the world; and he who brings in this power of life will execute judgment, "because he is the Son of Man." Then he adds: "Marvel not at this, for the hour cometh in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they who have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." In the remainder of the chapter he reasserts his intimacy with the Father and participation in his working. He appeals to the witness borne of him by John the Baptist, and to the greater witness which the Father was bearing of him in the divine works which he had given him to do. He appeals also to their own Scriptures, which bear witness of him, and rebukes them for not receiving him as their predicted and expected Messianic king. It seems incontrovertible that Christ here claimed to participate in the distinctive works of God, and therefore, as the Jews understood him, made himself equal with God. This claim could hardly have been asserted and vindicated more decisively. On other occasions, also, the Jews charged him with blasphemy, or took up stones to stone him, because, as they on one occasion expressed it, "thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John x. 30–39). Jesus never denied that he made this claim, nor explained that they misunderstood him. In all these cases we are confronted with the alternative — either Jesus believed himself to be divine and one with God, that God was acting in and through him under all his human limitations and conditions, or else he was not a sincere and honest man.

The New Testament ascribes the creating of the world to the God who was manifested in Christ. The strong assertions of John, both positive and negative, have been already cited: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Paul asserts the same: "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him." He says also: "The kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." [1] In this magnificent passage we must note the development of "all things" by the specification of all places, "the heavens and the earth," and of all orders of beings, from the lowest to the highest; so that the "Son of his love" cannot be included among the created beings. We must note, also, that all things were created, not only through him, but also unto him; and this is true only of God. And, lastly, he is before all things, and in him all things consist, or are constituted and perpetuated in the unity of a system. It is objected that in describing him as the first-born of all creation of God, Paul includes him among created. But the Greek word translated *first* may mean one previous to the series, and not included in it. Milton wrote: —

> "Adam, the noblest of his sons since born,
> The fairest of her daughters, Eve."

Milton did not mean to include Adam among his own sons, nor Eve among her daughters. This may have accorded with good usage in his day. And similar is the Greek idiom in the use of *first*. Of this we have examples in the New Testament. In John i. 15, "for he was before me" is, in Greek, "he was the first of me"; in John xv. 18, "it hated me before you" is, in Greek, "the first of you." Since this is a Greek idiom, we must interpret "the first-born" here as an instance of it; because, as we have seen, the remainder of the sentence entirely precludes the interpretation that the Son of his love is included with the things

[1] John i. 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 13–17.

created. In the first sentence of the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: "God hath spoken to us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who, being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

It is objected that in all the texts in which creation is ascribed to the God in Christ, the preposition translated *through* necessarily means instrumental agency. But there are instances in the New Testament in which the agency of the supreme God is in like manner denoted by the same preposition (Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. i. 9; Heb. ii. 10 and vii. 21). In these cases God is represented as acting through himself. This way of describing God's action, through himself or through the Son of his love, is exactly accordant with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

It has also been objected that Christ says: "For as the Father has life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John v. 26); and that this implies that he derived his powers from the Father. This is the paradox that the Father has given self-existence to the Son. This necessarily implies that the life in himself, which comes from the Father to the Son, is self-existence; of the very essence of the divine Being; that, therefore, the Son is not a finite, created, or dependent being. This paradox is totally incompatible with the Mohammedan, or the Deistic, or the Unitarian conception of God. But it is exactly accordant with the Christian conception of God as a Trinity or Three in One. As God opens out the absoluteness of his being in creating and evolving the finite universe and ever energizing in it, and thus progressively realizes his archetypal ideal, it is in and through the eternal Son, Logos, or Word of God, that he does it. Therefore the energy, light, and life, which the Son brings into the world, come from the Father through the Son. The Father thus giveth to the Son to have life in himself. It is the one God, the absolute, indivisible Spirit, revealing himself in his three eternal modes of being. God the Father, the absolute and unconditioned source of all that is; God the Son, in whom he is acting out from his absoluteness in creating and evolving the universe, physical, moral and spiritual; God the Spirit of holiness, proceeding from the Father and the Son, ever

present among all rational and moral persons in the moral system with divine influence to draw them to union with God in the life of love and so to develop them to the perfection of their being in moral likeness to God.

The redemption of man from condemnation and sin is a distinctive work of God, but it is ascribed to Christ. He is pre-eminently the redeemer and saviour; he came to seek and to save the lost. He is the mediator between God and man. God, then, must be in him. If in him alone man can come to God, in him God must come to man. And so Paul declares that it is the very essence of the gospel, which the ambassadors of Christ are to preach, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."[1] As such Christ proclaims himself through all his ministry on earth. He declares himself to be the light and life of men. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."[2] With full knowledge of the ignorance, the sorrows, the weakness and the sinfulness of man, he proclaims: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." He thus places himself in the centre of the moral system and, with consciousness of his own sufficiency to meet their wants, calls all men to come unto him for rest, and, with the consciousness of rightful and universal authority, commands them to take his yoke and learn of him. Just before his crucifixion he said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Here, again, he is in the spiritual system the centre from which flows forth the universal divine attraction drawing all men to God. His claim is: "Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." He presents love for himself as the distinctive and prevailing motive of the righteous life and work: "He that loseth his life for my sake"; "Every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my name's sake." He forgives sin; he sends the Spirit; he opens heaven. He claims to be the king of the kingdom of God on earth[3]; he is the being from whom, by

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19. [2] Matth. xi. 27.

[3] Matth. xi. 28–30; John xii. 32 and vi. 45; Matth. x. 39 and xix. 29; Mark ii. 5–12; John xv. 26 and xiv. 1–3.

whom, and for whom it exists and is perpetuated and extended. And because he is the redeemer of men he is also their judge.[1] And because, in so many ways and at so many times, Jesus, by word and deed, asserted or implied that he exercised divine prerogatives, the rulers of the Jews had repeatedly sought to procure his death. When at last he was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrim, he was convicted of blasphemy and judged worthy of death. The high priest said unto him: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Thus under oath Jesus answered, affirmatively: "Thou hast said; hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." In the morning they brought him before Pilate, charging that he was attempting to make himself king. But when Pilate found that he claimed kingship only in a kingdom not of this world, and wished to release him, they avowed their real charge — that under the Jewish law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. And when Pilate sought still more to release him they returned to their first accusation and intimated to the governor that it would be dangerous to him if he released one who was seeking to make himself king: "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend." [2]

3. The New Testament teaches that Jesus rose from the dead and returned to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, where he ever liveth, making intercession for us and administering the kingdom of God's redeemed in earth and heaven. There John sees him in the visions of the Apocalypse, exalted to divine glory. The Christology of this book is worthy of attentive study. It ascribes to the glorified Christ the names and attributes of God; it represents him as participating in the divine works of God and receiving the worship of heaven. This is the more interesting because the book was written about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.[3] At that date John designated Christ as the Word of God and presented as exalted a conception of the divine in him as, at a later date and in very different form, he had set forth in his gospel and epistles. As

[1] Phil. ii. 9–11; Col. i. 15–17; Matth. xxv. 1–46; John v. 22, 23, 27; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1.

[2] Matth. xxvi. 63–67; Mark xiv. 60–64; John xix. 6–12.

[3] Gebhardt, "The Doctrine of the Apocalypse," Transl. p. 11; Reuss, "History of the Scriptures of the New Testament," Transl. pp. 159–163.

Reuss says, "We must recognize without hesitation that Christ in the Apocalypse is exalted to the level of God."[1] And Ritschl says: "Like Paul and James, the Seer recognizes the full divinity of the exalted Christ, to which idea the Jewish-Christian representation of the pre-existence of Jesus as the original man and archangel does not reach."[2] Baur himself admits that the Apocalypse gives names of Jehovah to the glorified Christ; but he attempts to explain away its force: "The Christology of the Apocalypse has the peculiarity of ascribing to Jesus as the Messiah the highest predicates, but they are only names borne outwardly by him, and are not associated with his person in any inner unity of nature."[3] He attributes it to the writer's great eschatological hopes, which led him thus to glorify the Messiah. This is essentially the same with the mythical theory of Strauss, and is open to all the objections which have so often and so effectually been urged against it. Certainly on this theory such a glorification of a man is impossible by a writer who had lived with Jesus and had seen him die on the cross. For, according to the theory, such a one would have known that he never rose from the dead, that he wrought no miracles, that he made no claim to the powers with which his disciples afterward glorified him, and that, therefore, his life furnished no material nor reason for their glorifying him.

Representations of the glorified Christ, of similar significance, but in a different form, are found in the didactic and practical writings of the other apostles.

4. The New Testament teaches that worship is properly offered to the glorified Christ as to God.

The Christians at first were commonly designated from the fact that they were worshipers of Christ as Lord: "All that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place."[4] The Christians were at first regarded as Jews having some peculiarity of belief and worship, and this was one of the appellations by which they were distinguished. After they began to be called Christians among the Gentiles at Antioch, this continued to be a distinctive appellation. So Pliny, in his well-known letter, describes them as meeting and singing hymns to Christ as to a God.

[1] Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne, I., p. 346.
[2] Entstehung der Altkatholischen Kirche, p. 120.
[3] Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie, p. 244.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts ix. 14, 21; xxii. 16.

The first recorded instance of prayer to the glorified Christ is at the election of Matthias to the apostleship. Another instance is the prayer of Stephen at his martyrdom: "They stoned Stephen calling upon the Lord, and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'" Paul declares him to be in his exaltation the object of universal homage: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him and gave him a name, the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[1] In the Apocalypse we find visions of the worship of Christ and of ascriptions to him proper only to God. Paul and Peter offer to him similar ascriptions. In the apostolic benediction the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is joined with the name of God and of the Holy Spirit; or with the name of the Father; or sometimes it stands alone.[2] In the baptismal formula the name of the Son is joined with that of the Father and the Spirit. And when the shorter form was used, the baptism was in the name of Jesus Christ alone. The Lord's supper, the other solemn sacrament of the church, was instituted, and is celebrated in remembrance of him. Finally, faith in Christ is the indispensable beginning and support of all Christian character and work, and the one indispensable condition of justification. "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." This certainly is worship to be rendered to God alone. For worship is only the expression of faith or trust in God. And here the whole Christian life and work, with all its promise, its hope, its power of renovation, rests on faith in Christ. And by the prophet Jeremiah, "thus saith the Lord: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is."[3] Christ himself while on earth presented himself as the being whom all men must trust and serve in order to be saved. It has already been shown that he proclaimed himself as the predicted Messianic king, the king of the

[1] Acts i. 24; vii. 59, 60; Phil. ii. 9–11; Eph. i. 19–23.

[2] Rev. v. 8–14; vii. 9–13; 2 Tim. iv. 18; 2 Peter iii. 18; Rev. i. 5, 6; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. i. 3; Gal. vi. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 18.

[3] Acts iv. 12; Jerem. xvii. 5–8. See also Acts xvi. 31.

kingdom of God, the redeemer of men from sin, the central object of trust and source of hope for the whole moral system. This implies that he is always, and to all men, the object of worship. Accordingly he says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[1]

5. God, who is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is also revealed in the history recorded in the Old Testament, in his action among men in the same work of redemption in its preparatory stages; establishing among men in its germinal condition the same kingdom of God on earth which, in its maturer development, Christ proclaimed; and opening with gradually increasing clearness and fulness, through prophecy and promise, an outlook to his future revelation of himself in the Messiah, through whom he will develop the kingdom into a spiritual, universal, and everlasting kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament is the record of God's historical action in the redemption of men, preparatory to and issuing in the coming of the God in Christ. By redemptive action I mean all which God does to reconcile men to himself, and thus to bring them back from sin to their normal state of union with him in loving trust and service. According to the representation in Genesis, God's redemptive action began as soon as man had sinned. This appears in the fact that when Adam and Eve had sinned and were hiding from God in shame and fear, God sought them, recalled them to himself, and, while condemning them for their sin, received them again as worshipers. This is plainly implied in the narrative; and also in the fact that, from that time on, some of their sons and later descendants walked with God and were his accepted worshipers; others lived wickedly and brought divine judgments on themselves. And thenceforward through all the history of Abraham and Israel, God reveals himself among them in redemptive action, accessible to their worship, and bringing influences upon them to draw them away from wickedness to trust and serve him in ways of righteousness. It is sometimes asserted that the Jews had the idea of God only as shut up within his own rigid oneness and absoluteness, and thus precluded from coming into any intimate communion with men, — the idea of God, like that of the ancient Epicurean, the Mohammedan, the deist. But

[1] Matth. xviii. 20.

if this was the rabbinical teaching, it is not the teaching of the Old Testament. In this God makes himself known to Israel by his memorial name Jehovah, their God by covenant with them; he comes to them as Father, as the husband of his people; he compares his tenderness to a mother's love for her child. He reveals his perfections in diversified theophanies; he dwells and acts among them in relations of the closest intimacy. These revelations are anticipative and preparatory to the great revelation of the likeness between God and man, of God's love for man, the possible intimacy and union of man with God revealed in Christ. The Old Testament does not contain the great words: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life," nor the Christ on the cross that reveals its meaning. But in it is revealed the same God, who was to be in Christ, active in the preparatory stages of the same work of reconciling men to himself. In it God is revealed as merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; with him is plenteous redemption. In it we are taught to pray: "Have mercy upon me according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." It records the joy of those who can say: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."[1] Abraham's faith in God has become an example to all generations of faith as the root of all right character and the condition of acceptance with God.

In the Old Testament we find also, though as yet in its immaturity, the same kingdom of heaven which Christ proclaimed as at hand when he was about to unfold it into a heavenly and universal kingdom, a reign of righteousness. It is recorded in Genesis that God made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the God of him and of his seed on condition of their continued trust in and allegiance to him and their fidelity in keeping his commandments. This covenant was renewed with Isaac, and afterwards with Jacob. From this time on we trace in the history of Israel the history of a people of God who, by this same covenant, are united with him as their God and recognized by him as his people. Just before the deliverance from Egypt God

[1] John iii. 16; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Psalm cxxx. 7; li. 1, 2; xxxii. 1.

reveals himself anew as the God in covenant with Israel, and appropriates to himself the name Jehovah as the memorial of this covenant to all generations. The name had been already known, but not in the new significance now given it as God's memorial name.[1] At Sinai Israel was organized into a State under the government of God, administered through Moses, and on the foundation of the law given in the Ten Commandments. Ewald calls attention to this organization of a State on the basis of a covenant of righteousness with the one only God, Jehovah, as a unique and wonderful transaction.[2] In the organization of the State this code was taken up into the covenant of God with the people, as the law on obedience to which the fulfilment of his covenant to be their God and to bestow his blessing on them was conditioned. Hence the ark in which the two tables of the law were kept was called the Ark of the Covenant. This State afterwards became a kingdom, but under all its changing forms it always retained this fundamental peculiarity of its constitution. Through its whole history it was the kingdom of God. God was its king, and the human ruler was only the administrator under the sovereignty of God.[3] Hence in later times it was called a theocracy. Its distinguishing and wonderful peculiarity was its embodiment of the moral and spiritual and its ever brightening outlook to the Messianic times. The political organization included within itself the spiritual kingdom of God, consisting of his true worshipers, who trusted him in constant faith and served him in willing obedience. This inward spiritual life is emphasized by the prophets in distinction from the mere observance of the outward ritual, sometimes rebuking the priests

[1] It is greatly to be regretted that the revisers of the translation of the Old Testament did not retain the name Jehovah wherever it occurs in the Hebrew. The significance of many passages depends on the use of Jehovah as the memorial name, and is entirely lost in the translation "Lord."

[2] Revelation, its Nature and Record; T. and T. Clark's Transl., pp. 82, 83 ff.

[3] Tiele, in the last chapter of his "Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte," says it is certain that the oldest form of government in Assyria was theocratic. To these peoples, as to other Semites, the highest divinity was the real king; the human ruler was only his representative. No trace is found of the worship of the human king in Assyria, which was so frequent in Egypt, and which existed so much later in the Roman Empire. So in the inscription on the Moabite Stone, the king justifies every undertaking by saying, "Chemosh (the god of Moab) said unto me."

themselves for their formalism and their evil deeds; it is recognized in the whole history of the nation, and is explicitly declared in the New Testament: "They are not all Israel, who are of Israel." [1] The political organization inclosed the spiritual kingdom as a bur incloses the nut, the fruit the seed or germ, till in the fulness of time the conditions are such that it can shoot forth in a living, growing, and fruitful tree. This kingdom was in the political and ecclesiastical organization as the Holy of Holies with its Mercy-seat enshrining the invisible God was in the temple, until in Christ the veil was rent and the whole world became the Holy place with the mercy-seat accessible everywhere, and the Spirit of God working everywhere to bring men to Christ and to transform human society into the kingdom of God. And this grand development of the spiritual kingdom from within the visible is what Christ proclaimed when he began to preach and to say: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Through all the history of this kingdom in the Old Testament we find an outlook to this grand development and the prophecy and promise of its realization. To this the kingdom looked forward by virtue of its constitution. Because God has entered into human history in redemptive action to bring men back from sin to himself, the kingdom resulting from it carries in its essential conception the promise and the prophecy that the future is always to be better than the past. So in the beginning the fact that God sought the sinning pair before they sought him, and while they were hiding themselves from him, reveals his redeeming grace seeking men in their sins, of which the promise accompanying gives assurance for all time afterwards. The promise is also involved in the covenant of God with Israel as it was renewed in the successive epochs of their history. This great development of the kingdom is also through all the history the subject of prophecy and promise, becoming as the ages pass on distinctively Messianic. In Eden, when man had first sinned, is given the so-called protevangelium, or beginning of the gospel promise of redemption, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. In the covenant with Abraham is the promise: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." [2]

In that early age we find the promise of blessing to all man-

[1] Rom. ix. 6. [2] Gen. xxii. 18; xxviii. 14.

kind, and that through a universal religion of a common faith in the one true God, of a common worship, and of righteous living in obedience to him. This covenant is renewed at the greater epochs in the history of Israel, and with it is the renewal of the prophecy and promise of the blessing to come to all mankind through the development of the kingdom into a universal kingdom. The same promise is presented with ever-increasing clearness by the prophets. While the Jewish people became more exclusive and tended to shut themselves up into what afterwards became rabbinical Judaism, the prophets go on proclaiming more and more clearly the spiritual within the political kingdom and its destined development into a universal kingdom of God. Mr. Spencer says that a people in the earlier periods of its evolution cannot rise above itself so as to originate the ideas of its later civilization, and that those ideas if presented would be unintelligible. But here is a people whose literature cannot have been the spontaneous outgrowth of its life, but is even contradictory of it, and ever points onward to an ideal to be realized only in the far distant future. And it is this same covenant with Abraham and the promise inherent in it which quickened the progress of the kingdom through its preparatory stages, and which, renewed and expanded in Christ, still vitalizes the Christian life and the progress of Christ's kingdom on earth. Of it Paul says: "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise."[1]

This constitution of the kingdom and the covenant and promise of God vital in it constitute the basis of Messianic prophecy. This does not consist merely of isolated sentences selected here and there and identified as Messianic solely because quoted by Christ and his apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. These distinctive Messianic prophecies are not isolated. In them the covenant, promise, and prophecy inherent in God's redemptive action, fundamental in the constitution of the kingdom and underlying the whole course of its history, rise to their loftiest heights and attain their most distinctive and conspicuous manifestation; as mountain peaks rise, not isolated from the plain, but from a mountain range stretching, it may be, along the length of a continent.

Accordingly in Messianic prophecy the agency through which the promise is to be fulfilled is not at first definitely announced.

[1] Gal. iv. 28.

The promise to Adam and Eve indicates only that man's victory over the power of evil is to come in some way through the posterity of the woman. In the promise to Abraham the blessing to mankind is to come through his posterity. Then it is further defined as coming in the line of Isaac, and afterwards in that of Jacob. Then we find intimations that it will come through some great personage in the future; but the earlier of these are obscure and their meaning open to debate. Later we find clear and distinct predictions that the great development of the kingdom is to be effected through a personal Messiah. But even after this the older form of representation is not discontinued. Israel is still called the servant of Jehovah. But these two conceptions coincide. Israel stands for the spiritual kingdom of God within it; and the Messiah is its King, representing in himself all the spiritual forces potential in the kingdom and bringing it, with its covenant and promise of grace and all its promised power of renovation, into humanity, to be perpetuated as the kingdom of God forever.

In the theocracy Jehovah was the king administering the kingdom through the reigning monarch. In Messianic prophecy both of these aspects of the kingship are presented. In the prophecies of the future deliverer of Israel under the figure of the living Branch which was to shoot forth, it is sometimes the Branch of Jehovah (Isa. iv. 2–6), sometimes the Branch of the stock of David (Isa. xi. 1–10). In one line of prophecy the Messiah is to be the Son of David, to sit on David's throne and to perpetuate his kingdom. And Daniel also saw one like unto a son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. "And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." On the other hand, in the great prophecy recorded in the latter part of Isaiah,[1] there is indeed one important recognition of the perpetuity in the Messianic times of God's covenant with David,[2] which itself was but the renewal of the original covenant with Abraham; but aside from this, neither David nor the son or throne of David is anywhere mentioned. It is the servant of Jehovah, in and through whom, suffering for men, Jehovah is to realize the fulfilment of the Messianic promise.

[1] Chapters xl.–lxv. [2] Isaiah lv. 3.

In this and other prophecies, sometimes even in those in which the Messiah is also spoken of as the Son of David, it is Jehovah, the covenant God and king of Israel, who is to bring in the great consummation; attributes, works, and names of Jehovah are ascribed to the Messiah; the coming of Messiah is called The Day of Jehovah; the angel of Jehovah, the angel of the covenant, the Messianic king, are distinguished from Jehovah and yet identified with him; and the whole prophetic representation justifies the expectation that in the Messiah the double aspect of the theocratic kingship, the human king and the divine whom he represents, will be perpetuated and united in the person of the Messiah. This expectation was fully realized in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself as revealed in the New Testament.

In recent times some, even of Christian believers, are saying that they cannot find any Christ in the Old Testament. Before Christ came and before the New Testament existed, Jewish thought had become saturated with Messianic expectation from familiarity with the Old Testament alone.[1] It is surprising that any Christian can find no Christ there. The conception of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament which I have presented, penetrates deeper than this superficial view and lays hold of the real and profound significance of the kingdom and its history as there presented. The truth of this conception is confirmed by Christ and his apostles. Rothe says in substance, that Christ so used the scriptures of the Old Testament as to put it beyond doubt that he had a comprehensive and exact knowledge of them, even to their details, and had entered into their inward essence, into their spirit and their great religious and moral ideas, and therefore held the freest position in relation to the letter. While in them he stood above them. He adds: "In the light of this clear and full understanding of the Holy Book he oriented himself clearly as to himself and his peculiar vocation. The deeper he entered this sanctuary, the richer and more powerful pressed on him the relation to himself which he met therein. He found these scriptures assonant with his own consciousness and knew that they testified of him. Therefore he afterwards appealed

[1] "The ancient Synagogue treated as Messianic 75 passages from the Pentateuch, 243 from the prophets, and 138 from the Hagiographa; 456 in all; and their Messianic application is supported by more than 558 references to the most ancient rabbinic writings." — Edersheim, "Life of Jesus," vol. I. p. 163, and Appendix ix.

with unqualified confidence to their testimony of him and applied them to himself, just as a man points to a portrait which represents him. And because he found in the Old Testament a clear picture of the course of life marked out for him and of the predestined development of his human destiny, so he spoke of his history as the fulfilling of the Scriptures. We find already in the Old Testament the determinate roots and germs of all the ground-thoughts of his doctrine."[1] Accordingly in his walk to Emmaus, "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." "And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me." In the same manner Christ had appealed to the scriptures in presenting his claims to the unbelieving Jews: "Ye search the scriptures; and these are they which bear witness of me. If ye believed Moses ye would believe me; for he wrote of me."[2] The apostles also speak of the Old Testament as everywhere testifying of Christ. It was their custom, when visiting any city, to go first into the synagogue and reason with the Jews from the Scriptures, showing that Jesus was the Christ; and Peter declares, "To him bear all the prophets witness."[3] Accordingly Jesus appropriates to himself, and the writers of the New Testament apply to him, declarations of the Old Testament originally applied to Jehovah, the covenant God and King of Israel. Gess points out also various representations and functions of Jehovah which Christ appropriates to himself. Jehovah is the shepherd of Israel; Christ describes himself as the shepherd of his people. Jehovah is the husband of Israel; Christ also is the bridegroom. Jehovah is represented as coming to his temple as a refiner and purifier; Christ also purifies the temple. Elijah is to come before the great and terrible day of Jehovah; and Jesus declares that Elijah came in John the Baptist before his own coming.[4] The representations of Christ in the

[1] Zur Dogmatik, pp. 173–176.

[2] Luke xxiv. 27, 44; John v. 39, 46.

[3] Acts xvii. 2, 11; xviii. 24, 28; x. 43.

[4] W. F. Gess, "Das Dogma von Christi Person und Werk," Basel, 1887, pp. 244–246, 251; Ezek. xxxiv. 11–15; Jeremiah xxxi. 10; Isa. xl. 11; Ps. xxiii. compared with John x. 1–16; Isa. liv. 5, 6; Matth. ix. 15, xxv., 1–12; Malachi iii. 1–3; Matth. xxi. 12.

Apocalypse are like analogous representations of Jehovah in the Old Testament; an instance is the vision of Christ in the first chapter compared with the vision of the Ancient of Days in the seventh chapter of Daniel. The Jews regarded Jehovah as the incommunicable name. In reading the Scriptures they never uttered it, but read instead the word which in English is Lord. The Septuagint translators substituted the Greek word meaning Lord for Jehovah, in their translation. Thus the word Lord became, both in Hebrew and Greek, the common spoken designation of Jehovah. And this is the name appropriated by the apostles and the primitive Christians to Christ. Hence James calls Jesus the Lord of Glory. Peter says, "Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," as the Psalmist had said, "Oh, taste and see that Jehovah is good"; and again, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord," as Isaiah had said, "Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify." And Paul applies to the Lord Christ the words of Joel, "Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered;" and the words of Jehovah himself, "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Accustomed to hear Lord substituted for Jehovah in the reading of the Scriptures and in the service of the temple and the synagogues, the apostles, in appropriating to Christ the title Lord, must have understood and intended it as denoting his divinity, as identifying him with Jehovah, the covenant-God of Israel, now revealed more fully in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Christ also identifies his kingdom with the kingdom of Jehovah in the Old Testament. "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into outer darkness." Here he also recognizes the spiritual kingdom within the people of Israel, and the development of that kingdom at his coming into a universal kingdom, as the prophets had foretold.[1] Paul declares the same unity of the kingdom, and the same distinction of the inward and spiritual kingdom from the political and visible nation. The Jewish branches shall be cut off, and the Gentiles grafted in; but the olive-tree remains the same.[2]

Devout Christian feeling has always recognized a spiritual

[1] James ii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 3; Ps. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. iii. 15; Isa. viii. 13; Rom. x. 13; Joel ii. 32; Isa. xlv. 23; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Matth. viii. 11, 12.

[2] Rom. xi. 17, 18.

meaning in the Old Testament, and an outlook in its covenant and promise and in its Messianic prophecy to Christ. The revelation is indeed progressive. The kingdom in its preparatory stages exists in the environment of a rude age. To the people of such an age of the world and through them, as the medium of receiving, communicating, preserving and handing down the revelation, God must reveal himself. Hence, as Christ teaches, there is much in relation to the environment which is transitional, and much remained to be revealed in later times. And the latter at least was true of Christ's own revelation of God; he says: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." [1] It is true, nevertheless, that the spiritual significance and the outlook to Christ are in the Old Testament, and in all ages have been found there by Christian believers. An eminent Puritan divine said that every verse of the Bible has in it somewhere a window opening out to Christ. In his preface to the Old Testament of 1523, Luther says: "Here shalt thou find the swaddling clothes and the manger in which Christ lies . . . Poor and of little value are the swaddling clothes, but dear is Christ, the treasure that lies in them." Paul's language is remarkable: "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers . . . did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ." [2] Thus understood in its spiritual significance and its outlook to Christ, the Old Testament has always been used for the edification of Christians and in the worship of the church. The conception of it which I have given justifies this devout use of it by showing that it rests on the true apprehension of its real significance. The grammatical exegesis of every sentence is indispensable to the right interpretation of the scriptures; as anatomical dissection is indispensable to the scientific knowledge of the human body. But as dissection cannot of itself give the full knowledge of the body, much less of the man, so grammatical exegesis cannot give the full significance of the scriptural history in its unity, continuity, and wholeness. Analysis must always be supplemented by synthesis if true knowledge is to be attained. The scriptures claim to be the record of God's action in human history redeeming man from sin and establishing the kingdom

[1] John xvi. 12. [2] 1 Cor. x. 1-4.

of heaven on earth, and in this historical action revealing himself to man. It is only as we recognize this divine action recorded in them that we can interpret them aright and find their true significance. If we overlook this action of God recorded in them, all supernatural revelation drops out and nothing is left but the remains of an ancient literature, recording the myths and legends of a false religion founded on a false supernaturalism, with an elevated but imperfectly-developed morality; and we are forced back on the old rationalism, which has always proved itself untenable. [1]

6. That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself is the only adequate explanation of his relation to human history before and after his coming. We have seen that the Old Testament is essentially the history of God's action in redeeming men from sin and establishing and developing his kingdom on earth in its preparatory stages; and that Jesus is the Christ who fulfils the promise and prophecy of the ancient covenant, who is the predicted Messianic king, and who develops the kingdom into a spiritual kingdom for all mankind. And through him and the Holy Spirit whom he sent, the kingdom was thus developed. Against the most strenuous opposition, first of Judaism, then of the Roman empire, it established itself and has prevailed. It has extended itself over vast territories; from its ancient covenant of promise, unfolded in its true significance and made effective by Christ and the Holy Spirit whom he has sent, it has quickened spiritual life and effected reconciliation with God in thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, a great multitude whom no man can number; it has brought into human history the idea and expectation of progress as an effective power in civilization; it has vitalized the progres-

[1] "In all God's dealings in history, there is always a positive element of actual progress; a step forward, even though in the taking of it something should have to be crushed. And this step forward was the development of the kingdom of God . . . This organic unity of Israel and the Messiah explains how events, institutions, and predictions which initially were purely Israelitish, could with truth be regarded as finding their full accomplishment in the Messiah. From this point of view the whole Old Testament becomes the perspective in which the figure of the Messiah stands out. It is in this sense that we understand the two sayings of the Talmud: 'All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah'; and, 'The world was created only for the Messiah'" (Edersheim, "Life of Jesus," vol. i. pp. 162, 163).

sive and enlightened nations; it has created a new civilization which, though according to the promise still looking forward to a future better than the past, is more enlightened, powerful, progressive, and beneficent than any non-Christian civilization. Thus the ages preceding Christ looked forward to him as their hope; and the ages succeeding him look back to him as the source of spiritual light and progress; and all look up to him in his glory as the source of their inspiration and strength in the life and work of faith and love and of their hope of blessedness in the life to come. Thus Christ is the central personage in human history. It is Christ who binds the ages in moral and spiritual unity and continuity, reveals the "one increasing purpose" which runs through them all, and therein reveals the true end for which man exists, the highest possibilities of his being, and the true significance of his history. The ancient covenant with its Messianic promise, prophecy, and hope, and the action of God in accordance with it, centring in Christ, and redeeming man from sin and establishing the divine kingdom, are through all the ages realizing the archetypal purpose of eternal wisdom and love. The recognition of Christ as central in human history and his kingdom as the end to be progressively realized in it, is essential to any true and complete philosophy of human history.

7. It remains to notice the incidental evidence that God is in Christ: the tone and spirit of Christ's own words and actions; the atmosphere in which he moves; incidental sayings and acts of Christ implying his consciousness of the divine in him; the general tone and spirit of the apostles, and incidental sayings and deeds revealing their trust in him as divine. In this incidental evidence the New Testament makes an irresistible impression on us that Jesus was himself conscious of divinity, and that his disciples and the churches which they gathered had a devoted and unwavering trust in him and loyalty to him as divine. It was this faith which inspired Stephen and all the martyrs of the primitive churches. I shall not unfold this evidence. To do it would be little less than to examine the whole New Testament. It is exemplified in his consciousness of authority above man's disclosed in his criticisms and emendations of the law in the sermon on the mount and at other times. His consciousness of his divine greatness is revealed when he says of himself in his

humiliation as man: "My father is greater than I." John in his first epistle declares emphatically: "Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the anti-Christ; and now it is already in the world." He is supposed to refer here to docetic opinions already making their appearance, which denied that Christ was really man, and maintained that all that seemed to be human in him was appearance only, not reality. This indicates that, before the generation to which the apostles belonged had passed away, the belief of the deity of Christ was so prevalent and overmastering in the apostolic churches that the first error was the denial of his real humanity. Professor Goltz calls attention to the fact that the belief that God was in Christ had called into existence a peculiar phraseology previously unknown: God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, Those who call on the name of the Lord, and many others.[1] Paul says: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He thus presents Christ as the central subject of all Christian preaching, the centre from whom issue the light, inspiration, and power of the ministry of reconciliation, and to whom all, who through this ministry are reconciled to God, are drawn. The epistle of James shows that its author worshiped Christ as the Lord of glory. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the Acts of the apostles, abound in representations of Christ implying and assuming that God is in him. Even in the gospel of Mark, in which this incidental evidence is less conspicuous than in the writings of Matthew and Luke, an air and manner, and words and actions are ascribed to Jesus which would imply intolerable self-assumption in any man.[2] These are a few of the many instances in the books of the New Testament of incidental evidence that God is in Christ, and illustrate the spirit and tone which pervade them all, the atmosphere of thought and feeling in which all the writers move.

IV. God in the Holy Spirit. — We have seen that God in Christ reveals himself in two eternal modes of being — as the

[1] Die Christlichen Grundwahrheiten, § 77; see pp. 84–107, §§ 63–80.

[2] Mark i. 7–11; ii. 5–11, 18–22, and 27, 28; viii. 38; xii. 35–37; xiii. 26, 27; xiv. 62; xv. 2.

Father, and as the Son, or Logos, or Word of God. The deity of the Father has never been controverted. It is not denied that the Father is revealed in the scriptures as God and distinguished from the Son, or Word of God, revealed in Christ. The question here at issue has always been whether the Son, or Word of God, represented in the scriptures as revealed in Christ, is God. That he is God has now been shown. Therefore it is certain that, in the biblical representation, the Father and the Son are distinguished and that each is represented as God.

With equal clearness God is revealed in the Bible in a third mode of being, in the Holy Spirit. It is not denied that the names Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, denote God. This is too obvious to be disputed. Divine names and acts are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; the same acts are sometimes ascribed to God and sometimes to the Spirit, — as the inspiration of prophets and apostles, the new birth, sanctification, the indwelling in the Christian. The question at issue here is as to the distinction in God between the Spirit, and the Father, and the Son. In establishing the deity of the Son of God in Christ we have established a distinction in God of the Father and the Son. This sets aside all *a priori* objections to a similar distinction of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The same passages of scripture which declare the distinction of the Son from the Father in repeated instances refer also to the Holy Spirit and reveal a similar distinction between the Spirit and the Father and the Son. In many other passages the recognition of this distinction is indisputable (John xiv.–xvi.). There are, of course, passages of scripture in which God is said to be Spirit, or is called the Spirit of God, without explicit reference to the threefold distinction, as when Christ says God is a Spirit. But these do not contradict the passages in which the distinction is indubitably recognized. The Spirit of God is spoken of in the Old Testament; the prophecy of Joel that it should be poured out on all flesh was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This is analogous to the revelation of God in Jehovah, the covenant-God and king of the kingdom of God, and the Messianic promise and the intimations of a distinction in God involved therein.

V. The one and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. — We have now ascertained the elements of the scriptural repre-

sentation of what God is. The next step must be to combine them in a unity of thought. This necessarily gives us the scriptural idea of God as triune, three in one; designated in theology by the name trinity, which is simply a contracted form of triunity. "The doctrine of the trinity is not a result of mere speculation, not a theory or hypothesis spun by theologians out of their own fancies, still less, as some eminent writers would maintain, the result of the importation of Greek metaphysics into Christian theology. It is, in the first instance, the result of a simple process of induction from the facts of the Christian revelation. . . . The triune conception of God is justified, when it is shown to be the conception which underlies the triune revelation God has given of himself, and the triune activity in the work of redemption." [1]

The elements to be combined are three.

First. The oneness and onliness of God.

Second. The three eternal distinctions or modes of being of the one only God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

Third. The proper deity of each of the three; that is, God, the one indivisible Absolute Spirit in each of these peculiar and eternal modes of being.

1. In any correct synthesis or comprehension in thought of the scriptural teaching as to the Trinity, we must begin with the oneness and onliness of God. It is necessary to apprehend and declare this in its true and full significance in order to guard against any departure from the belief of it through overstatement or misunderstanding of the scriptural representations of the threefold distinction of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The fact must be emphasized in the outset that, whatever may be the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is included within the unity of the one only God.

God is numerically and indivisibly one in his substance or essential being. This is the common doctrine of our evangelical Protestant creeds; as the Westminster Catechism declares that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." The same has been the teaching of the great Protestant theologians. Turretin affirms that God, in his essential being, is indivisibly and numerically one,

[1] James Orr, D. D., "The Christian View of God and the World, as centring in the Incarnation," pp. 303, 304.

and as such is the only God, and there can be no other; that the Son has from eternity essential being numerically the same with the Father; that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have between them numerically the same essence, the like of which does not exist among created beings. This doctrine he defends against polytheists and also against tritheists, who exaggerate the threefold distinction in the Godhead into what is equivalent to three Gods.[1] So Calvin also teaches: "It is evident from our writings that we do not take away the persons of the trinity from the essence of God; but simply interpose a distinction between them while they remain in the one essence. If they were separated from the essence we should have three Gods, not a trinity of persons contained within himself by the one God."[2] Augustine also says: "All those catholic expounders of the divine Scriptures whom I have been able to read, who have written before me concerning the Trinity, who is God, have purposed to teach, according to the scriptures, this doctrine, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit intimate a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality; and therefore that there are not three Gods, but one God."[3] The same is the teaching of the so-called Athanasian creed: "We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance." Gieseler says: "The unity and equality of the persons, which necessarily resulted from holding sameness of essence, was not fully acknowledged at once, even by the Nicenians, but continued to be more clearly perceived, until at last it was expressed by Augustine for the first time with decided logical consequence."[4] And from his time on it became the established belief of the western church. But it had been the more common doctrine before Augustine's day. The real meaning of the Nicene creed on this point began to be debated almost as soon as the Council adjourned. But it seems incontrovertible that the Council meant to declare the doctrine afterwards taught by Athanasius and Augustine, that the Son is of the same substance or essential being, with the Father. This is the legitimate

[1] Instit. Theologiae, Locus III., Quaestio III. ii., iii., ix.; Quaest. XXIII. xi., xii.; Quaest. XXV. ii., iii.; Quaest. XXVIII. iii.; vol. i., pp. 163, 164, 165, 230, 238, 252; Carter's ed., New York, 1847.

[2] Institutes, Lib. I., cap. xiii. 25.

[3] De Trinitate, Lib. I., chap. iv. 7.

[4] Church History, Translation revised by H. B. Smith, vol. i., p. 313.

meaning of homoousios, ὁμοούσιος, the word by which they described the oneness of the Son with the Father. But, because the word was used with different meanings, this of itself does not settle the question. But that this was the meaning they gave it, is evident from the fact that they used it in opposition to the error that the Son was only ὁμοιούσιος, of similar substance with the Father; also from the dissent of Eusebius and a considerable minority, on the ground that it meant the same substance; also because the Son is described as the true God before all ages, by whom all things were made; and because, if this was not their meaning, the creed would declare their belief in two Gods, a belief which their history shows they never held. And at a still earlier period we find this belief that God as Father, Son, and Spirit is one in substance and essential being, fully formulated by Tertullian. He says of the Son of God: "He is God and the Son of God, and both are one. And thus Spirit from Spirit and God from God becomes another *in mode of being, not in number;* in order, not state or standing (*i. e.*, as divine); and has gone forth, but has not gone out of (or separated from) the original (divine) source. . . . They are three, not in substance but in form, not in power but in a specific distinction; but of one substance and power . . . Hold fast always the rule which I avow, in accordance with which I testify that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not separated. When I say that they are distinct, only ignorance or perversity will take this as meaning a diversity which issues in separation. . . . For the Son is other than the Father, not by diversity, but by distribution; not by division, but by distinction. The Father and Son are not the same, but they differ one from the other in their mode of being (*modulo*)." [1] Augustine says that the Greek theologians taught that God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is one in essence (οὐσία), but that the Latins used either essence or substance; because, he says, essence usually means nothing else but substance in Latin.[2]

We see, therefore, that the prevalent doctrine of the church and its theologians has been that God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is numerically and indivisibly one in his substance or

[1] Apologeticus adv. Gentes, chap. xxi. adv. Praxeas, chap. iii. and ix.
[2] De Trinitate, Lib. vii., chap. iv. 7.

essential being.[1] Therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, one in a merely generic unity, as men are one in the unity of the genus; nor in a merely moral unity, as persons of the same moral character and purpose are one. They are distinguished as three only within the numerical and indivisible oneness and onliness of God.

It is sometimes said that God as absolute transcends all number. "To apply arithmetical notions to him may be as unphilosophical as it is profane."[2] But this position is as fatal to monotheism as it is to tritheism and polytheism. If God transcends all forms of number it is as "profane" to say there is one only God as to say there are three, or a thousand. It is argued that, in order to count things together, there must be some point of likeness among them so that they can be designated by a common name. But Dr. Newman says, God "has not even such relation to his creatures as to allow, philosophically speaking, of our contrasting him with them." Here, then, is a complete sundering of God from all likeness to his creatures and from all relation to them. Man is no longer in the image of God nor capable of coming into any communion with him or of having any knowledge of him. This speculation is founded on some false idea of the absolute which necessarily issues in pantheism, epicureanism, or agnosticism.[3] If God exists he must be a being, and has the name *being* and all its essential attributes in common with his creatures. If he is a personal Being, man is also a personal being and has reason and the attributes of a rational person like God, and is capable of knowing, loving, and serving him. Thus man knows himself in the likeness of God, and knows God, in distinction from himself and all finite beings, as the one only absolute and all-perfect Being. Thus he knows that the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit, whatever it may be, is compatible with and included in the oneness and onliness of God.

[1] The English word *essence* has not the same meaning with *substance*, either in logic or in philosophy or in popular usage. I use the phrase *essential being* as more nearly expressing the true meaning.

[2] J. H. Newman, "Grammar of Assent," pp. 48, 49. Basil also presented the same idea. See Hodge, "Theology," vol. i. p. 463, and Dorner, "Person of Christ," vol. ii. p. 310.

[3] See my "Philosophical Basis of Theism," chap. xii., and my "Self-Revelation of God," part ii., chaps. viii., ix., x., on the Absolute, and Chap. III. of this volume.

God transcends the principles of arithmetic in the same way as he transcends the principles of geometry; all these mathematical principles are eternal in him, the absolute Reason. We gain nothing in constructing our idea of the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, by assuming that his essential being contradicts the principles which are eternal in him as the absolute being. On the contrary, we plunge ourselves in the bottomless abyss of a denial that the universe is ultimately grounded in Reason and of an assumption that it is grounded in unreason.

In our attempts to form and complete a true conception of God, we must in the outset take a strong grasp of the truth that he is the one and the only God; and this we must firmly hold through all our investigations. If any conception of the Trinity, if any speculation on the being and works of God relax this grasp, we shall drift in hopeless error.

In beginning with the oneness we follow the order and method of the biblical revelation. God in revealing himself as recorded in the Bible began with the truth that he is the one and only God. For centuries he was instructing and disciplining Israel in the knowledge of himself against the enticements of the polytheism which surrounded them. It was only after the captivity in Babylon that this truth became so vitally incorporated into the national life that they never afterwards departed from it. Then in the coming and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit he opened more fully the recesses of his being and revealed its different aspects and the diversified riches of his wisdom and love as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and further still as the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

At different periods in the history of the church Christian theologians, in their zeal to defend and emphasize the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit, have taken positions logically involving tritheism, or at least verging very closely on that great error. These exaggerations have been the occasions at different times of reactions against the scriptural doctrine itself which these have been supposed to represent. The truth that there is one God, who is the only God, is the fundamental truth of religion and appeals powerfully to the religious intuitions and sentiments of all men. Any line of thought which throws this great truth into the background, or weakens the belief of it, imperils all the interests of the church of Christ. Therefore, in all our attempts

to attain a true and complete knowledge of God so far as he has revealed himself, this truth must always enlighten, direct, and dominate our thinking.

2. The second element in the true and Christian idea of God is the threeness: God is eternal in three modes of being, in which, when revealed, God is known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This distinguishes the scriptural doctrine of God from Sabellianism, the doctrine of the so-called modal Trinity, according to which the Father, Son, and Spirit do not denote modes of being eternal in God, but only different modes of manifestation in time, different ways of action in which God reveals himself to men.

Because in his highest self-revelation God makes himself known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, these three modes of being thus revealed must be eternal in his essential being as God; otherwise the revelation is not God's revelation of himself, but a mere make-believe and pretence. Besides this, the scriptures, as we have seen, present this distinction as eternal in God. They teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is each eternal, and ascribe to each the names, attributes and works of God. Thus it is evident that the doctrine of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, involves no contradiction. God is not three in the same sense in which he is one. He is not three beings in one being, nor three Gods in one God, nor three persons in one person. He is one God in three eternal modes of being.

This or some equivalent expression of the trinitarian distinctions in the unity of God is common in theology. Professor Shedd in his annotations on the American translation of Augustine on the Trinity, says repeatedly that "the three divine persons . . . are three modes or forms of one undivided substance numerically and identically the same in each" (pp. 20, 101). He teaches the same in his "Dogmatic Theology" (vol. i., pp. 183, 187–189). Dorner and other German theologians use the phrase "modes of being" to designate the trinitarian distinctions. Turretin says the three persons are distinguished "by their modes of subsistence" (Loc. III., Quæst. xxiii. 5, 8, and xxvii. 10, 14). Tertullian, in the passage already quoted, declares that they are distinguished in form or in mode (*modulo*, the diminutive of *modus*). Basil calls their distinction a mode of being (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως). Dorner says, "this became, through

John the Damascene, the standing formula for the innermost relation of the distinctions in God, while the formula for the merely economic Trinity is that God has three modes of *manifestation*" ("Christian Doctrine," vol. i., pp. 381, 382, note). The same in meaning, though expressed in different words, is the teaching of Calvin and Augustine, and, indeed, the common teaching of trinitarian theologians, that without division of the divine substance or essence the three differ only in some peculiar property, or some peculiar relation to each other, or in some peculiar mode of subsistence. The criticism of the form of expression which I have used, that it involves Sabellianism, is entirely unjustifiable. Calvin himself was at one time charged with teaching Arianism, and not long after with teaching Sabellianism. He says it troubled him exceedingly (*vehementer perturbavit*) that his calumniators had injected their unjust opinion of him into so many churches ("Epistolæ," Letter to Grynaeus, Rector of Academy of Basle, Ed. Amsterdam, 1667, p. 227).

It has seemed necessary in theological thinking to have some common name for the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, and it has been much debated what the name should be. It may be suggested that this may be a case in which a common name is impossible. There is only one God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each is the name of God in one of these peculiar modes of his being. And this peculiar mode of being distinguishes God in each mode from God in each of the other modes of being. Therefore, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is each alone and without a fellow in each several peculiar mode of being. Yet they are not three Gods, as Cicero, Virgil, and Horace are three men. It would seem to follow that there can be no common name for the three, but only a proper name for each. They are only thus designated in the Bible. And we shall find it safest to confine ourselves to the biblical designations, which, as used in theology, have become proper names of the three, Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

But it is a convenience, and perhaps a necessity, in theological thinking to have a name common to the three. Different names have been used: by the Greeks, prosopon (aspect), hypostasis, ἰδιότης (meaning a peculiar property or nature); by the Latin theologians, subsistence and person. The word "person" has become fixed in the usage of the western churches as the common

name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit But it must be borne in mind that, when thus applied, it is used as a technical term and not in the sense in which it is now used both in philosophy and in common speech. By "person" we now mean an ego, an individual endowed with reason, free will, and susceptibility to rational motives, and conscious of himself as one and the same being in all his activity. Boetius gives this definition: "A person is the indivisible substance of a rational nature." [1] In this sense of the word there cannot be three persons in God, but only one; for God is one indivisible substance. When applied to the three eternal modes of being in God it is used in a peculiar and technical sense. The Latin theologians began very early to use the word "person" as the common name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is supposed to have meant originally a mask, worn on the stage, through which the voice sounded. Thence it came to denote a character in a drama, personated by the actor. It was also used to denote a man acting in different characters or offices, as Cicero said: "I being one sustain three persons"; that is, he acted in three characters, which might be, as senator, as consul, and as advocate in a court. The same usage survives in English; Robert South says: "How different is the same man from himself, as he sustains the person of a magistrate and that of a friend." The supposition of Thomas Aquinas, that it is derived etymologically from *per se unum*, that which is one in itself, is not well sustained. And from the beginning, theologians, who have used the word "person" as the common name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have applied and explained it as denoting distinctions within the one only personal God, the one God in a peculiar mode of being. Thus they have shown that they did not use the word in the sense in which it is now commonly used as denoting a distinct, individual, personal being. Used with this latter meaning, the assertion of three persons in one God would be a glaring contradiction incorporated into the Christian conception of God and made the foundation of the whole system of Christian doctrine.

At different times, when in the course of the ages this subject has been prominent in theological discussion, the suggestion has been made that the word "person" be no longer used in this application

[1] "Persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia."

to the distinctions in the Godhead, and that some other word be substituted,—as hypostasis, or subsistence, both of which have heretofore been freely used.[1] But it has been so often and so earnestly explained that the word is used in a technical and qualified sense, that this ought to be generally understood by all who controvert the doctrine. And the word "person" is so fixed and universal in the creeds and theology of the western churches that it would be difficult to remove it; and it probably would be impossible without causing misunderstanding and division, and unsettling faith. It is to be noticed, however, that in the doxologies, the benedictions, the sacraments, the hymns and worship of the church, the biblical names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are commonly used, and the name "person" is rarely applied to them. Nor do we often find in them the word "trinity," and other non-biblical words and phrases which scientific theology finds it convenient or necessary to use. It is evident, therefore, that if they are necessary to theology, they are not necessary to religion and worship.

In the long controversies from age to age on the Trinity, a considerable number of technical words have come into use: person, substance, subsistence, essence, nature, hypostasis, homoousian, consubstantial, and others. The use of words of this class has been the occasion of much misunderstanding, confusion of thought, and empty logomachy. Words of this class in one language have been misunderstood, or wrongly applied, by persons writing in another; different words in the same language have been used to denote the same thing; the same words have been used with different meanings, at different times, and by different contemporary writers, and even by the same writer; the very words used by some to denote God's substance or essential being, in distinction from the three modes of being, have been used by others to denote the three modes of being in distinction from the one divine substance or essential being.[2] Hence the history of the controversies on this subject, long drawn out through the centuries, is dreary, disheartening, and provocative of skepticism.

[1] "If it is desired to substitute one word for another, let it be called *subsistence*." (Calvin, "Institutes," Lib. I., cap. xiii. § 2.)

[2] Calvin says: "I observe that the Fathers of the ancient church, while they always spoke with great reverence on these matters, neither agreed with each other, nor were always consistent with themselves." He proceeds to give numerous examples. ("Institutes," Lib. I., cap. xiii. 5.)

This the most profound and godly defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity have deeply felt. Dr. J. H. Newman says: "The word Trinity belongs to those notions of God which are forced on us by the necessity of our finite conceptions, the real and immutable distinction which exists between person and person implying in itself no infringement of his real and numerical unity." [1] In the Unitarian controversy in this country, Professor Moses Stuart said: "We profess to use the word person merely from the poverty of language; merely to designate our belief in a real distinction in the Godhead; and not to describe independent conscious beings, possessing separate and equal essences and perfections. . . . I could heartily wish that the word person never had come into the symbols of the church, because it has been the occasion of so much unnecessary dispute and difficulty . . . If it must be retained, the use of it ought to be so explained and guarded as not to lead Christians into erroneous ideas of the nature of God." [2] Calvin says: "They deceive themselves who dream of three separate individuals, each of whom singly obtains a part of the divine essence. . . . Let us not take up into our minds an idea of the Trinity of persons which detains the thought upon the separation and does not immediately bring it back to the unity. The words Father, Son, and Spirit, certainly intimate a real distinction; let no one think them empty epithets in which from his works God is variously designated; but it is a distinction, not a division . . . Let them [the theological names] be buried, if only the belief persists that the Father, Son, and Spirit are one God; and, nevertheless, that the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit, the Son; but that they are distinguished by some peculiar property. I am not so austerely precise as to keep up a strife about naked words." [3] Augustine says that these theological terms "sprang from the necessity of having words to use when copious reasoning was required against the devices or errors of the heretics;" and also, since God transcends human speech and human thought, "that we may be able in some way to utter what we are in no way able to utter fully." He adds the important, far-reaching truth: "God is known more truly in our thought than in our words; he is more in reality than in our thought." [4]

[1] Grammar of Assent, p. 48.
[2] Letters to Channing, 3d ed. Letter ii., pp. 34, 35.
[3] Calvin, "Institutes," Lib. I., cap. xiii. §§ 25, 17, 5.
[4] De Trinitate, Lib. vii., cap. iv. 9, 7.

Athanasius, in his Epistle to the Monks (about A. D. 358), says of the mystery of the Trinity: "The more I desired to write and endeavored to force myself to understand the divinity of the Word, so much the more did the knowledge thereof withdraw from me; and in proportion as I thought that I apprehended it, I found myself to fail of doing so. Moreover, I was unable to express in writing even what I seemed to myself to understand; and that which I wrote was unequal to the imperfect shadow of the truth which existed in my conceptions. Considering that it is written . . . in the Psalms, 'The knowledge of thee is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it,' I frequently designed to stop and to cease writing; believe me, I did. But lest I should disappoint you, or by silence lead into impiety those who have made inquiry of you and are given to disputation, I constrained myself to write briefly what I now send to your piety." Hilary says, "we are compelled to intrust the deep things of religion to the perils of human expression."

The question now arises, What are the peculiarities by which the three modes of being are distinguished? The answer is, that it is pre-eminently in the work of redemption that God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and it is through this revelation that we learn, so far as it is possible for us to know, what the distinctive peculiarities of these modes of being are. We are therefore to ascertain them simply as they are set forth in the Bible. The biblical representation cannot be examined here. It can be unfolded only in the study of God's work of redemption in all its aspects, as the Bible sets it forth. And this constitutes a principal part of doctrinal theology.

3. The third element in the Christian conception of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the real deity of each of the three. This has been already established. It only remains to make some explanations of this third element in order to prevent misapprehensions.

It has been shown that the doctrine of the church, as set forth by its ablest theologians, is that the one only God is eternal and indivisible in three modes of being, in which, when revealed, he is known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and in each of which he is, by some peculiarity, distinguished from himself and related to himself in his other modes of being. From this point of view the third element in the Christian idea of God is this: It is the

one only God who is eternal and indivisible in that mode of being in which he is called the Father; it is the same one and only God who is eternal and indivisible in the mode of being in which he is called the Son; and it is the same in that mode of being in which he is called the Holy Spirit; or, conversely, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

The doctrine is not that the Father is God the absolute Being, the Son God in his personality. The one only God is the absolute personal God, and it is this absolute personal God who exists in each of the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The distinction is not a quantitative division, a part of God in the Father, a part in the Son, and a part in the Holy Spirit, and the whole God only in the unity of the three. The one God is indivisible. It is not that the Father is God, and the Son and the Spirit attributes, faculties, or powers of God. The one personal God is undivided and eternal in each of the three; yet in each mode of being he is distinguished by some peculiar *proprietas*, or property, and so by a peculiar relation of each to the other. Hence the personal God cannot be known fully in all his manifoldness till we know him in all three of his modes of being, — as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[1]

This doctrine is often objected to as incomprehensible or even as self-contradictory. Certainly some of the forms in which it has been stated seem open to this objection. For example, Calvin and Augustine, in the passages quoted in the note, seem first to distinguish each of the three by a peculiarity, and then to declare that, as thus distinguished, they are the same. But the context

[1] The Augsburg Confession defines "person" as used in defining the Trinity, "Persona est quod proprie subsistit," using *proprie* in its well-known theological meaning to denote a mode of subsistence (not of manifestation) marked by some peculiar *proprietas*, or property. Calvin says: "The entire nature is understood to be in each hypostasis, with the distinctive property peculiar to each. The whole Father is in the Son, the whole Son is in the Father; as he himself said, 'I in the Father and the Father in me' (John xiv. 11); nor is one separated from the other by any difference of essence, as ecclesiastical writers concede." And he quotes with approval Augustine: "By these appellations which denote distinction is meant the peculiarity in which they are reciprocally related to each other, not the substance itself in which they are one" ("Inst." Lib. i., cap. xiii. 19). And Augustine says: "In that Trinity one is as much as the three together, nor are two anything more than one. They are infinite in themselves. So they are each in each, and all in each, and each in all, and all in all, and all are one" ("De Trinitate," Lib. vi. cap. x. 12).

and the whole tenor of their teaching demonstrate that this is not their meaning; they mean that, while God exists in these three distinguishable modes of being, it is one and the same God who exists in each. This seems intelligible and consistent. Its meaning, consistency, and possibility may be illustrated from the analogy of the human personality. A man is one and the same person in three modes of being, — reason, free will, and susceptibility to rational motives. These are not mere modes of manifestation, but are inherent in his constitution or essential being as a person, before he has ever revealed them in action. They are not quantitative parts of the human person, because as a person he is indivisible; they are modes of being essential in his personality. They are not faculties or attributes, but are names of the undivided person in these several modes of being. It is the whole undivided person that thinks and knows in the reason, determines the direction and exertion of his energy in the free will, and feels himself in the impulse of motives and the reaction of emotions. And yet in each mode of being is a peculiarity by which the person is distinguished from himself in another mode of being, and comes into a peculiar relation to himself in that other mode. The mind knowing truth is distinguished by that peculiarity as reason from the will, which is the same mind directing and exerting its energy; and in each of these modes of being it is distinguished from the same mind conscious of feeling. Hence we cannot know the human person in the full development of his personality until we know him in all three of these modes of being. Theologians in all ages have held that, since man is in the image of God, he is in the image of the Trinity, of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[1] We see clearly the similitude as to the point that the one indivisible God is in each of the modes of being which are known by the names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet is distinguished therein from what he is in each other mode; and that we cannot fully know God in his personality till we know him in all three of his modes of being. It is commonly said that the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a distinction in the personality of God. More properly, it is a distinction in God, the absolute personal Spirit. We now see that it is inherent in the constitution of man as a personal being and essential to the idea of personality that there be one person in three modes of

[1] See Augustine, "Trinity," Books ix.–xv.

being. A tri-unity is essential to personality, whether in the absolute Spirit or in a finite person, like man. This analogy proves also that there is no inconsistency or contradiction of reason in the doctrine that the one only God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also helps us intelligently to apprehend the doctrine.

But this does not remove all mystery from the idea of God. We are not to suppose that because God is personal like man, and man as personal is an image or adumbration of the Trinity, therefore God is altogether like one of us, and that we compass him in our finite thought and see him on every side. We are not to suppose that God the Father is Reason, that God the Son is Will, that God the Spirit is Feeling. In each mode of being it is the one God, the absolute Spirit, with all the essential attributes of personal spirit. The analogy is between beings that differ by the whole breadth between the absolute and the finite. It helps us to apprehend God, but not to comprehend him. He is always the absolute Being, and always transcends us. Through his revelation of himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he has opened to us vistas into his being wider, deeper, and clearer than any other revelation has opened. And for that very reason his absoluteness and transcendence stand out to view more massive and overawing. Enlarging the area of clear vision necessarily enlarges the visible horizon of the unknown which encircles it. And because God is the absolute and all-perfect Being, the three modes of his personal being transcend the three forms of human personality, as the absolute and infinite must transcend the dependent and the finite.

It may be objected that this representation of the three in one and the one in three falls short of the biblical representations of the three: one sends and another is sent; one speaks to another; they are distinguished by the pronouns, I, thou, and he; one is called the Word of God, and the only-begotten. So far as these forms of expression pertain to Jesus in his earthly life, they may be explained by the peculiarity of his state of humiliation in the flesh. But in their highest application to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there is a real though less complete analogy with the human person. A man's reason is said to command his will; his will is said to obey his reason, to consent to its principles and laws; his feelings are said to overpower him, to run away with him; his will resists, subdues, rules over his feelings;

Socrates says that thinking is the mind conversing with itself. The man is said to be in conflict with himself, to reproach himself, to be ashamed of himself, to indulge himself, to command himself, to compel himself to do what he does not wish to do. Paul speaks of the conflict of the two egos within himself. Such forms of representation, expressing so exactly the consciousness of a finite person, may indicate analogous distinctions in the consciousness of the infinite God properly demanding representations like those of the Bible for their adequate expression. These analogies may help us to see a real significance and consistency in the doctrine of the Trinity. But it must be remembered that they are mere analogies of the finite and dependent with the absolute and unconditioned; and that, therefore, the divine Trinity, however great its revelation of God, must transcend all finite analogies.

I cannot here enter further into the consideration of questions pertaining to the relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the internal being of God. I only add that, whatever the meaning of the scriptural representations alluded to, I must still insist, with Augustine and Calvin and the greatest divines who have left us their matured thoughts on the Trinity, that the various appellations and representations by which the scriptures set forth the distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indicate God himself in a peculiar mode of being wherein he is distinguished, by some peculiar property or relation, from himself in another mode of being, and always bring us back to the oneness of the one only God in these three modes of being. Any interpretation of these scriptural representations incompatible with this drives us to tritheism, and thus contradicts the scriptural revelation of God in its wholeness, in its fundamental principles, and in its unity and continuity from beginning to end. No one can doubt that Jesus himself and the writers of the Bible were believers in one only God. We know God as the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, only as he has revealed himself. This revelation compels us to infer that he exists thus eternally. But if we attempt to pass beyond the created universe and God's revelation of himself in it, and try to picture how God existed and acted as three in one before anything was created, we necessarily fail, for we transcend the limits of the human mind.

Some of the Christian fathers, especially among the Greeks, held to a subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father.

The view which I have presented excludes this subordination, at least in the sense of inferiority or dependence or beginning of existence in time. Gieseler says that all subordination in the Trinity was effectually excluded by Augustine in his teaching that the Father, Son, and Spirit are numerically one and the same in essential being. But Professor Charles Hodge says: "This does indeed preclude all priority and all superiority as to being and perfection. But it does not preclude subordination as to the mode of subsistence and operation. This is distinctly recognized in Scripture, and was as fully taught by Augustine as by any of the Greek fathers, and is even more distinctly affirmed in the so-called Athanasian Creed, representing the school of Augustine, than in the creed of the Council of Nice. There is, therefore, no just ground of objection to the Nicene Creed for what it teaches on that subject. It does not go beyond the facts of Scripture." [1] Such a subordination is indicated in the names Son and Word of God, and in Christ's representation of the Holy Spirit as sent by the Son from the Father. And it is in and through the Son that God creates and develops the universe, physical and spiritual; and in the Spirit he abides in it and brings all the influences and agencies of God's righteousness and grace to a focus on the hearts of men. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Son is called the effulgence or outshining of God's glory and the very image of his substance. This comparison with the sun has been used in all the ages ever since. The sun, shutting its light within itself, cannot itself be seen, and the universe is in darkness and cold and death. The light bursting forth illuminates, warms, and vivifies the universe, and is itself revealed in its overpowering glory. The sunbeams reflected and refracted in the atmosphere create the diffused and genial daylight, and, resting on the earth, unsoiled by the contact and touching every earthly thing, bring out whatever of beauty or vitality is hidden in it. And the light is one and the same, whether in the sun, or streaming forth through space, or resting on the earth and nourishing all things. So the Father is the original fountain and source of light and life and energy; in the Son he goes forth in creating the universe and energizing in it, and in the Spirit he abides in the universe, and especially in the spiritual system, quickening spiritual life and carrying forward the great designs of his wisdom and love. And yet in all conditions

[1] Systematic Theology, vol. i. p. 464.

and modes of manifestation it is one and the same God. And if we would carry our thought beyond the beginning of the created universe, God is never a dead thing, but is eternally active, and in himself must be the agent and the object of his action, the thinker and the object of his thought. And the object must in some sense be second to the agent, the object of thought to the thinker, and the medium of their conscious unity must be in some sense the third. This the Greeks designated as περιχώρησις, the circulating energy within the absolute God. And this was called the eternal generation, not as having beginning or end, but simply as declaring that the relation of Father and Son and all the reciprocal action involved in it are eternal in the essence of God. God is eternal, ceaseless energy. Here we are trying to pass into that eternal sphere which transcends all power of imagination to picture. But this we know, — that in it all, whether within his own eternal being or energizing in the creation, it is the one only indivisible God; and that in him, Father, Son, and Spirit, there is no subordination in the sense of inferiority or dependence or beginning.

4. The Trinity is the word used in theology to designate the one only God thus eternally existing as Father, Son, and Spirit. It denotes tri-unity; three in one, not three and one.

The Bible does not give the name Trinity nor explicitly formulate the doctrine. This, however, does not disprove it. We have ascertained the three elements of the biblical conception of God. If we combine these in a unity of thought, we have the Trinity. Any other conception, Sabellian, Arian, or Socinian, leaves out one or another of the three elements of the biblical idea of God. The doctrine of the Trinity merely expresses or formulates the biblical revelation of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a sufficient proof of the doctrine.

We also find the elements of the doctrine brought together in the biblical representation in a way which necessarily implies the Trinity. They are thus joined in the formula of baptism. The baptism is to be in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in the name, as of one, — not in the names, as of three. They are also joined in a similar manner in the apostolic benediction; in our Lord's parting address to his disciples; in Paul's account of the distribution of spiritual gifts; in Peter's

recognition of the three in the redemption of man; and in the baptism of Jesus.[1]

The objection that neither the word Trinity nor any explicit formulation of the doctrine is in the Bible is equally valid against all theological thought, or, what is the same thing, against all attempts to gain true and clear ideas of what the Bible teaches. Christianity, free agency, free will, the personal God, and many other familiar words and phrases are not in the Bible; but the realities which they denote are there. The fact that a truth of God is revealed in its practical relations rather than in a scientific formula does not make it any less a truth. If the elements of a great reality are separately revealed, and a theological doctrine fairly takes them up and expresses them, the doctrine is as true as if it had been formulated in the revelation. It does not become a human invention any more than the scientific law of gravitation is a human invention because it merely formulates the result of scientific thought on many observed facts. The law of gravitation is not formulated in nature any more than the doctrine of the Trinity is formulated in the Bible. Both in the physical and the spiritual worlds God acts before us and reveals himself in the action, and leaves us to interpret his action and declare its significance. There is no more science in nature than there is theology in the Bible. But neither in the one nor the other are our scientific statements of the facts and their laws false.

It is objected that the doctrine of the Trinity was not held by the Christian fathers during the first three centuries of the Christian era. But the elements of the doctrine were held by the ante-Nicene fathers, and thought was already busy in attempting to grasp and formulate them. In faith in the God in Christ the church was founded and began its career of conquest; in this faith its apostles and missionaries preached and its martyrs died. This objection also, like the former, is an objection against all theological thinking. The study of God's revelations of himself, in order to define clearly what they reveal, to learn their significance, and to comprehend them all in their harmonious relations and their unity as revelations of God, must be a work of time. Therefore the history of the doctrine in the first centuries, instead

[1] Matth. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; John xiv.–xvii.; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5; 1 Pet. i. 1, 2; Matth. iii. 16, 17.

of being an objection to it, is rather an evidence of its truth. It shows that this doctrine stood forth so conspicuously in the life and teachings of Christ and the apostles that it forced itself on the attention of the early churches, and was one of the first to be discussed and formulated. The whole history shows that it was not the discussion and formulating of the doctrine which produced the belief of its truth; but it was the practical living faith in the God in Christ, in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which produced the discussion and led to the formulating of the doctrine. Professor Goltz says: "There were Christians before the ecclesiastical dogma of Christ was formulated, and who had no knowledge of it. Therefore it was not the dogma concerning Christ which generated Christianity, but the historical personality of Jesus that generated the doctrine respecting him. . . . What was Christ, the historical founder of Christianity, in the inmost core of his being? What made Jesus of Nazareth into the Christ of God, into the centre of divine revelation and sacred history, into the centre of his own testimony and of the apostolic preaching, into the personal, living ground of the church in its doctrine, culture, and conduct, into the pivotal point of Christian piety in faith, hope, and love?"[1] It is precisely because Jesus was what he was, and his testimony respecting himself and the testimony of the apostles respecting him were what they were, that the Christians trusted and worshiped and served him, and were ready to die for him as the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and in and through him found the one God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[1] Die Christlichen Grundwahrheiten, pp. 134, 135.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRINITY: — ITS PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The doctrine of the Trinity presents to the intellect the clearest, most comprehensive, and reasonable idea of God and of his relations to the universe.

I. The Idea of God. — The Trinity proves itself to be, in its essential contents, the only worthy and satisfactory philosophical conception of God and of his revelation of himself in the finite. As revealed in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, it is essential to supplement the half truths of philosophy, to clear away its seeming contradictions, to harmonize the philosophical conception of God with that of religious faith and the revelation in the Bible, and to give a reasonable, comprehensive, and self-consistent idea of him.

1. In the Trinity the two phases of the idea of God as the absolute Being and as personal Spirit are comprehended in unity. Philosophy, trying to comprehend God merely as the absolute Being, often misses the way and loses itself in the abyss of agnosticism. The absolute becomes an adjective without a noun, a negative idea without positive contents, a being identified with non-being, a zero which is the symbol of the cessation of thought. On the other hand, when men think of God only as a personal spirit, his absoluteness is overlooked and God is regarded merely as a magnified man. But the Trinity combines both aspects of the absolute Spirit and presents them in harmony and unity in God. It gives full emphasis both to his personality and to his absoluteness. It reveals his absoluteness in his personality, as that which gives the absolute positive contents. It presents God as the personal Spirit more clearly and forcibly than any other conception of him. It opens out his personality to us, amplifies our knowledge of it, and discloses in him a personality of which

the personality of man is a true likeness. It reveals the manifoldness of his wisdom and the variety and intimacy of his relations to man. But in its revelation of God as spirit it keeps ever before us his absoluteness, and awes us with his transcendent majesty and his incomprehensible infinitude. As the revelation of his personality goes on, the absolute Being more and more opens to our view like a mountain through the breaking and lifting mists. In his revelation of himself as the Trinity he reveals his love in its breadth and length and height and depth, so that we can, as it were, take the gauge and dimensions of it and know the love of God in Christ, and yet find that it passeth knowledge. It opens vistas of insight into the internal constitution of God. But the deeper insight into his being only awes us the more in the vision of his absoluteness, and discloses the more the clouds and darkness which are round about him. We even think we see in the personality of man a certain likeness to the Trinity in the personality of God. For man exists as one person in three modes of being, — as reason, as free will, and as susceptible of being conscious of self as blessed in the perfect realization of his own ideals of wisdom and love. But in the revelation of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is plain that, however near he brings himself to us in his three modes of being, he transcends us therein by the whole distance from the finite to the infinite or absolute. The greatness and sublimity of his revelation of himself as the Trinity all the more compels us to exclaim, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways; how small a whisper do we hear of him; but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job xxvi. 14). The more we know of him, the more the unknown comes in sight. The doctrine of the Trinity does not permit us to lose the absoluteness of God in his personality as Spirit, nor his personality as Spirit in his absoluteness.

A common difficulty of philosophy in accepting theism has been the objection that the absolute cannot act in the finite nor even co-exist with a finite universe, because he would be thereby conditioned and limited. This has led, on the one hand, to the overlooking of the absoluteness of the Deity, and, thinking only of his personality in the likeness of man, to the disintegrating of the divine into a multitude of finite gods. Or, on the other hand, it has led to the losing of the personal Spirit in the abstract absolute, and so sinking into the void of agnosticism or the morass of pan-

theism. The biblical revelation does not philosophize on this difficulty. But in it God reveals himself as the absolute Spirit creating and evolving a finite universe and ever acting in it. In his absolute being he is the universal Father. But in the biblical revelation the Father is represented as creating the universe and administering it through or in the Son or Word. All God's revelations of himself in the finite universe are through or in the Son or Word. "There is but one God, the Father, *from* whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through* whom are all things, and we through him" (1 Cor. viii. 6). The universe being created, and rational persons in the likeness of God, who is a Spirit, having been created in it, he abides ever in it as the Spirit of Holiness, using all the influences of wisdom and love to develop these persons in his own moral and spiritual likeness in the life of love, and so is progressively realizing his eternal archetype of all perfection and well-being possible to be realized in a finite universe, including rational but finite free agents, which is the great end for which the universe is created and evolved. This threefold potentiality is eternal in God as the absolute Spirit; not merely three modes of action or manifestation in time, but three modes of being eternal in himself, the absolute Spirit, whereby it is possible for him, without ceasing to be the absolute and infinite, to act in the finite, and in the creation and evolution of the finite universe to reveal himself as personal Spirit, glorious in all spiritual perfection. And he is one and the same God, revealed in each eternal mode of being, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From this point of view, the incarnation of God in Christ becomes antecedently probable. If God can reveal himself in material things, how much more may he reveal himself in man. And if every man is a personal spirit and as such in the likeness of God and a revelation of God, it is easily conceivable that God should reveal himself in Jesus Christ, taking possession of and acting in and through the organization and nature of man, and so revealing just what God's character would be, and how he would speak and act, if under human limitations and conditions. We have also seen that the coming of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is the continuance and development of his kingdom and of the revelation of himself as the Son or Word of God, in Jehovah, the covenant God of his people as recorded in

the Old Testament. And it has been continued through all ages since Christ, in the Holy Spirit, in whom the redemptive energy of the Son or Logos in Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, and afterwards in Christ, is delocalized and made universal, and God, as the Spirit of Holiness, continues historically active among men through all ages, developing the same kingdom of universal love and gathering men into it on earth and into the glory and blessedness of life immortal with Christ.

Therefore the coming of God into humanity in Christ is the central fact in human history, to which all before it looked forward and from which the subsequent progress of man to the realization of the ideals of perfection and well-being has issued. And only in the light of this central fact is any true philosophy of human history, any true and complete conception of the real significance of human life and of the ideals of perfection and well-being to be realized in it, possible.

In view of this central fact in human history, this greatest of miracles, we must see that it is antecedently probable that the birth of the divine man, our Saviour, would be miraculous, and that after death he would rise from the grave, triumphant over death, and receive the answer to his own prayer, "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5).

We see revealed in the humiliation or self-emptying (kenosis, Phil. ii. 7) of the Son of God in Christ, the universality and supremacy of the law of love, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up. In fact all God's action in the Son or Logos is in conformity with this law, the highest stooping as it were from his supreme absoluteness to act in the finite, creating and evolving the universe in the forms of space and time. Therefore God coming into humanity in Christ only continues and carries to its highest conceivable form his revelation of himself in the Son or Logos creating and evolving the universe in accordance with the universal law, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up. Here, again, we see the antecedent probability of the coming of God into humanity in Christ. It is only carrying to its highest conceivable form the revelation of himself which from the beginning God has been making in the creation and evolution of the universe in harmony with the law of self-renouncing love, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up. Here we also

see, not only the basis of the true philosophy of human history, but also the fundamental law which must have regulated God's revelation of himself to rational beings in all worlds. We know not the precise way in which God has revealed himself in other worlds. But because God is everywhere the same, we know that he must have revealed himself in the likeness of finite rational persons, seeking them in love to bring them into communion and union with himself in loving and obedient trust, and acting in accordance with the law of all his action in the universe, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up, — a revelation, whatever its form, as complete and effective as the revelation in Christ. All rational beings are in the likeness of God, the eternal Spirit; and God will reveal himself to them as spirit like themselves, the human side of God, and will reveal his eternal love and his affinity for them, seeking them to bring them into communion and union with himself in love, and so to develop them to their highest perfection and well-being, so that, like him, they may seek all who are beneath them to lift them up. We know not the form in which God will reveal himself in Christ glorified to the glorified spirits in heaven. But he will reveal the human side of God, and the divine side of man. He will reveal God in the fulness of his love for man as plainly as Christ revealed it on earth. He will reveal humanity realizing its ideal in the likeness of God and glorified in communion with him, realizing in completeness that fellowship with God which through Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, begins on earth. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). And in like manner all rational persons from all worlds, who have lived and are living lives of universal love, will find God revealed in the Son in their own likeness, seeing him, as it were, face to face. So will be fulfilled in the immortal life in glory the sublime declaration of Paul respecting the Christ glorified as the Son of God: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9–11).

Therefore the Son of God, in whom God is revealed in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is the same who is revealed in

the creation and evolution of the universe. The incarnation, as the highest form in which the Son of God reveals himself in the finite, is a central fact in the creation and evolution of the universe. In it he reveals God's likeness to his rational creatures, his affinity for them, his love descending to the lowest to lift them up to fellowship and union with himself, his development of his kingdom on earth and in the life immortal, the grand archetypal ideal for the realization of which he has brought the universe into being, and is ever active in its development. In whatever analogous form he may have revealed himself to rational persons in other worlds, it must be the revelation of the same God in his likeness to his rational creatures and in his love for them, seeking them in love to draw them to himself in the life of universal love, the highest coming down to the lowest to lift them up and form them into his own moral likeness in similar condescending and self-renouncing love, and progressively realizing the same archetypal ideal in the kingdom of God. All rational persons from all worlds who have lived and are living the life of love, when they attain the heavenly glory, will see the Son of God in their own likeness, presenting the human side of God as plainly as Christ did when on earth, but the humanity glorified. Then, when they look upon one another, they will see one another in the likeness of God, saved and purified and glorified by God's condescending love, and will all be in unison in their common relation to God as revealed to men in Christ and their common interest in the kingdom of God and the continued progressive realization, in heights of glory inconceivable by us, of God's archetypal ideal of all possible perfection and well-being.

This opens to us the meaning of Paul: "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii. 4, 5). It gives us insight into the grander outlook opened to him in writing one of his later epistles: "Having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage" (Eph. i. 10). It even gives us some glimpse of the meaning of Christ's own wonderful words: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. . . . The glory

which thou hast given me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one . . . I will that where I am, they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory" (John xvii. 21–24).

2. In the Trinity the two phases of the idea of God as the one and the manifold are comprehended in harmony and unity; the one is revealed in different modes of being and in manifold manifestations. Philosophy has often fallen into the error that the absolute One must be a self-inclusive Monad that admits of no being beside itself; to the absolute One there can be no other. From a false conception of the absolute it infers that the real existence of a finite being would imply a limitation of the absolute. Therefore it denies that God can create a universe, or any real being that is finite. It falls into further error, and ascribes to God a simplicity of being, incompatible with his having distinctive attributes. It argues that to ascribe to him reason, free-will, or blessedness, wisdom, power, or love, would imply division and limitation. Thus, again, philosophy falls into agnosticism; the absolute Being, shut up within itself and stripped of all distinctive attributes, is reduced to a zero, the symbol of the cessation of thought. On the other hand, when men fix their attention only on the manifold powers of the absolute revealed in the universe, they have lost the unity of God and have become polytheists. They worship many gods severally revealed in the powers of nature. But the Trinity takes up the oneness and the manifoldness of God and comprehends them in harmony and unity. In the Trinity the One finds its Other, and its unity with it, within itself. In this Other, God sees himself as the object of his own knowledge. Therein he sees the archetype of all truth, right, perfection, and good which almightiness, inspired and guided by love and wisdom, can ever express. In creating the universe and energizing in it, he is progressively expressing this archetype of his own perfection of power, love, and wisdom, by giving it reality in the finite, and thus is, as it were, ever becoming conscious of himself and of his own perfection as progressively revealed in the universe in the forms of space and time. Thus the universe becomes the ever evolving expression of the perfection of God, the temporal becomes the ever "moving image of the eternal." Thus God sees himself not only in the Other within himself, but

also as revealed in the universe. In thus knowing and revealing himself as the Trinity, God reveals himself as not shut up within himself incommunicably in a self-inclusive simplicity, but as coming forth in creating the universe and energizing in it, as bringing into it moral beings in a moral system, who are objects of his love, as revealing himself in it in Christ and his ever-present Spirit redeeming men from sin and establishing his kingdom of righteousness and peace. To men he communicates the riches of his grace, and brings them into communion with himself. His is no longer the incommunicable name, but the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into which every believer is to be baptized.

3. The Trinity comprehends in harmony and unity the two aspects of God as transcending the universe and immanent in it. Philosophy, considering God as transcending the universe, falls into the error of isolating him from it. Either he is regarded as the First Cause, remote in the beginning, the creator of the universe but not immanent in it, — or as too great to concern himself with the trivial interests of finite beings, — or as too pure to defile himself by creating the universe, or, after some demiurge has created it, by immanence in it. Or, in view of sin and suffering, it supposes an eternal power of evil independent of God. On the other hand, considering God's immanence in the universe, philosophy lapses into pantheism and identifies the universe with God. But in the Trinity God reveals himself as at once transcending the universe and immanent in it. He sees it distinct from himself, yet always dependent on him. He sees it revealing his perfections and declaring his glory. In it are persons in his own likeness, who are the objects of his providential care, his righteous government, and his universal love. Instead of being too pure and holy to be in the universe, as Greek philosophy in some of its forms was teaching, he in Christ enters into humanity, mingles with sinners, and participates in their sorrows to redeem them from their sins.

4. The revelation of God as the Trinity is the basis for comprehending him as eternally active within his own absolute being independently of the creation.

The action in which God reveals himself is action in creating and administering the universe. The objection is urged that thus God's action is only relative to the universe, and therefore conditioned and limited. But because God reveals himself by action

on and in the universe, it does not follow that he cannot act otherwise. It is evident that God is never dead substance, but the eternally living and acting God. As absolute Being he cannot be dependent on the universe, but must be eternally capable of activity within himself, and independent of the universe. And it is involved in his personality that his action must be eternally self-exertive, self-directive, and free. He "shall neither slumber nor sleep." Various inadequate attempts have been made to reach a philosophical solution of this problem. If with Philo we describe God as an overflowing cup, his fulness necessarily overflowing into creation, or if, on the other hand, he is conceived as having wants, to satisfy which he must create the universe, in either case he is represented as dependent on the universe and conditioned by it. If, with Julius Müller and Dorner, we say that if God is the absolute and unconditioned, he must be the cause of his own being, must create himself, otherwise God would be conditioned and limited by the constitution of his own being, which he did not cause or create, — then we get, indeed, the conception of eternal activity, but God is resolved into mere action (*actus purus*). This supposes action abstracted from the agent, and this abstracted action creates the agent; it supposes the exertion of power without a being to exert it, and this abstracted exertion creates the being who puts forth the exertion. Thus the Gnostic abyss of nothingness reappears as the origin of all things, and the absolute becomes a mere zero, or symbol of the cessation of thought. If, rejecting this absurdity, we swing to the opposite extreme, and say with Spinoza that God is the one only substance, then he cannot create a universe, he is not the efficient transitive cause of anything, he cannot act or cause any effect in time and space. He is thus limited by being shut out of time and space and shut up in his own being, as really as finite beings are limited by being shut up within time and space and unable to transcend them. The necessary inference is that all the finite is an illusion; that there are no finite beings having any real existence, no intelligent beings in a rational and moral system to whom God may reveal himself; and, if there were, that God could not reveal himself to them. Then God himself sinks to an unknowable and an unthinkable, a zero which denotes the cessation of thought, and the universe and all knowledge would be overwhelmed in a hopeless vortex of Nihilism.

But in the trinitarian conception God is the absolute Spirit, eternally active as at once the subject and the object of his own knowledge, love, and action.[1] And because he sees eternally in his own Reason the archetype of the universe which he has freely chosen to be realized in the forms of space and time, he eternally sees himself revealed to himself as he will progressively reveal himself to his creatures in time. Thus in the Trinity, without attempting to picture it in the imagination, we find a reasonable basis for thinking of God as eternally active within himself independently of the universe. In the universe he progressively expresses in the forms of space and time the thought which in himself is archetypal and eternal. Thus time is the progressive revelation of eternity.

> Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity. —SHELLEY.

Thus the Trinity is the basis for comprehending God as eternally active within his own absolute being independently of the creation.

5. The Trinity is also a basis for a reasonable apprehension of God's action revealing himself in the universe, while not identified with it. Thus it is a basis for answering objections urged by false philosophy against the possibility of his so acting and revealing himself. Thus we may find that we must go back to the Trinity as the ultimate basis of the world-process and of all scientific knowledge of it.

The Scriptures represent God the Father as being in himself unrevealed in any creative act, and therefore, as thus unrevealed by his own action, unapproachable and unknowable in his absolute being. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18). And Christ himself says: "Neither doth any one know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matth. xi. 27). But God as the Word or Son is represented as no longer shut up within his own being, but also as coming forth in creating the universe and acting in it, which is distinct from him while always dependent on him

[1] Oh Light eternal, sole in thyself that dwellest,
Sole knowest thyself and known unto thyself,
And knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself.
DANTE, Paradise, Canto xxxiii. 125.

(John i. 1–5). Accordingly, the Son is spoken of as "the outshining of God's glory and the very image of his substance" (Heb. i. 3). God is represented as coming forth also in the Holy Spirit, "whom," Christ says, "the Father will send in my name," and "whom," he also says, "I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father" (John xiv. 26; xv. 26). The Father and the Son are here represented by Jesus as uniting in sending the Holy Spirit and thus as concurrently bringing into the universe in him the energies of God in the three modes of his eternal being. Thus in him God is ever immanent and active in the universe, and especially as the Spirit of Holiness, abiding with men forever, quickening them to the life of love and advancing God's kingdom of righteousness and good-will. The theological doctrine, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, is derived directly from these teachings of Christ. The Eastern church omits "and the Son." Thus it fails to express the full truth as Christ declared it, and so misses an essential and important part of the significance of the mission of the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit all the energies of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit go forth unitedly into the universe and are immanent and active in it in advancing the great ends of divine wisdom and love for which it exists. The circuit (περιχώρησις) of God's eternal action in the three modes of his absolute being, independent of the creation, is always within himself in conscious oneness. So, in his action in the universe revealing himself in the eternal distinctions in his being, the divine energy concentrates itself in unity in the Holy Spirit. So Peter represents this concurrence in unity in the redemption of a sinner: "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 1, 2). Thus in the Spirit all the divine influences and energies of redeeming grace are united and may be concentrated in a focus on every individual heart, to quicken it to the life of faith and love. Thus it brings every soul into contact with the heavenly influences which bathe it like the sunshine, and thereby into immediate connection with God; and every willingly receptive spirit is penetrated by the divine energy and through the indwelling of the divine Spirit is quickened and nourished by the all-pervading love of God. Augustine calls attention to the fact

that the Spirit in its relation to the Father and Son is called by the name which designates God: "God is a Spirit." Of this he says: "Therefore the Holy Spirit is a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son, and on that account, perhaps, he is so called, because the same name is suitable both to the Father and the Son. For he himself is called specially that which they are called in common; because both the Father is spirit and the Son is spirit, both the Father is holy and the Son is holy. In order, therefore, that the communion of both may be signified by a name which is suitable to both, the Holy Spirit is called the gift of both."[1] The Spirit perpetuates and carries forward through all time the redemptive work of God in Christ. So Christ represents his work: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 13, 14). This concurrence of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in carrying forward the work of redemption through all time, is recognized by Christ, who says indiscriminately, "the Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, that proceedeth from the Father," and, "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name" (John xv. 26; xiv. 26).

In Hegel's Trinity the absolute Being is conceived as evolving itself into the universe and returning into itself enriched with the consciousness of itself as revealed to itself in the universe. Here the Spirit, the third in the Trinity, is conceived as God thus returning into himself conscious of himself in his oneness in this threefold form. But because Hegel's conception is pantheistic it loses all real significance. The absolute is impersonal and unconscious. It comes to consciousness only in the consciousness of finite beings. Thus the absolute as self-conscious is divided into innumerable individuals, each having his separate self-consciousness, and the absolute is incapable of any unity of consciousness in itself. Pantheism can preserve the unity of the absolute Being only by denying the reality of any finite being and therefore of any finite person. Finite beings must be regarded as mere modes of the existence of the one absolute Being. Thus all

[1] Trinity, Bk. v., chap. xi. 12.

real personality and freedom are lost and a moral system in any true significance cannot exist. Notwithstanding this, Hegel regards Jesus Christ as the man who first recognized his nature to be divine, and in whom God first knew himself in humanity. But this is incompatible with pantheism and loses all real significance if forced into pantheistic modes of thought. The Hegelian Trinity suggests truth, but gropes in vain for its real significance and its adequate expression. These are found only in the Christian Trinity.

As reason and will are inseparable in idea, so they are revealed as inseparable in the universe. For what science finds everywhere in the universe is power acting in conformity with principles and laws of reason. Accordingly Hartmann says: "The whole world-process is, in its content, only a logical process, but in its actual existence, a continuous action of will." Here is a great truth which is recognized with real significance in the Christian Trinity, but which in the forms of pantheism loses all real meaning. Reason and will, as Hartmann uses the words, are unconscious and impersonal, therefore not reason and will to which we can attach any meaning. Reason and will in unity constitute personality. Hartmann falls into the contradiction of affirming their existence in unity and denying the personality, and then identifying them with the unconscious and impersonal world-process.

This exemplifies a characteristic of Hegel's philosophy and of pantheistic thinking since his day. It takes up some truth or fact presented in Christianity. An attempt is made to find a basis for it in pantheistic philosophy. This may suggest to a Christian thinker thoughts helpful in attaining a reasonable explanation and vindication of the Christian doctrine. But the attempt to find in pantheistic philosophy a basis for the Christian doctrine is necessarily unavailing, because pantheism is a philosophy which destroys all real significance in the Christian truths themselves, and in the thoughts suggested for their justification and explanation. Hence the remarkable fact that this Hegelian philosophy is always approximating to theistic and even to distinctively Christian ideas, but is never able to give their real significance and their adequate expression. On the contrary, their real significance drops out.

Here is one danger in philosophical theology at the present time. It is the danger of being led by the truth suggested by these explanations to embrace the pantheistic philosophy which underlies them, and so to lose the personal God and the moral system altogether. This is possible, because pantheism is a one-sided, narrow, and erroneous conception of God's immanence in the universe. Christianity also declares this immanence, but comprehends with it all complemental truths, which pantheism overlooks. Christianity itself has given the conception of God, which pantheistic speculations attempt to explain and justify to the reason. The very ideas which pantheism suggests, and by which Christian thinkers are in danger of being fascinated into pantheism, are presented by Christianity in their real significance, with more clearness and power, and with a comprehensiveness which escapes the contradictions of pantheism, and holds the truth in harmony with the full-orbed compass of divine revelation and rational philosophy. The great safeguard against the present tendency to pantheistic conceptions of God is the Christian revelation of the Christian Trinity, the God in Christ, and the ever-present Spirit of Holiness dwelling in every receptive soul. And this is, philosophically considered, the only worthy, complete, and satisfactory conception of God ever presented to the human mind. It is the only one which presents a satisfactory comprehension of God as at once absolute Being and personal Spirit, of the co-existence and the distinction of the absolute and the finite, and of the revelation of the absolute in the finite.

God reveals himself as a Trinity in the universe pre-eminently in his action in redeeming man from sin. This we should naturally expect; the moral system consists of the highest order of created beings; therefore, in creating such beings and dealing with them in a moral system under the moral law, God makes the highest and fullest revelation of himself. But it is reasonable to expect to find some revelation of the Trinity in the constitution of man and even in the physical system. Accordingly, profound thinkers have imagined that they have found in the "world-process" an expression, type, or adumbration of the Trinity. We have already found in the personality of man, who is in the likeness of God, an analogy to the tri-unity of God. In organic life we see progress from unity to diversity, and thence to a higher

unity. In the hatching of an egg there is, first, the homogeneous yolk, then diversification, then the unity of all the diversified parts in the living chicken. Christ takes organic growth as the type of the growth of his kingdom, — "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Spencer tells us that this process of organic life and growth is the type of the evolution of the universe; first, the homogeneous, then its diversification by motion; then the unity of molecules and masses, of many beings organic and inorganic, in a system the unity of which is dynamic in the interaction of many forces, and rational in the action of forces in accordance with rational laws and for rational ends. It is not strange that minds plunged into these depths of speculation are sometimes bewildered and lost. At the same time it will not be surprising if the theory of evolution, disclosing, in all the action of the universe in which God reveals himself, a circuit from the homogeneous through diversity to a higher unity, shall bring, from physical science itself, illustration and support to the doctrine of the Trinity, and even to some of the speculative explanations of it. All reflective thought consists of apprehension, differentiation, and integration or comprehension; in other words, of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It may be that this is the law of all thought, because so only can thought accord with the constitution of the universe and discover and comprehend the reality in it; that there is a tri-unity in thought because there is a tri-unity in the universe, both in the rational and the physical systems; and that, therefore, we must go back to the Trinity in God as the ultimate basis of the world-process and of all human knowledge of it.

God is in the universe as the sunshine on a waterfall; the water ever changing and flowing, the sunshine ever abiding. But it is not merely that the sunshine reveals the rolling and falling water, but the water also reveals the sunshine, reflecting it in every direction and refracting it through the spray in all its prismatic colors in the rainbow. Here again is an illustration of the fact that it is the eternal which is continuously revealing itself in the flow of time; as the white light of the sun, the same through all the ages, is diffused into mild daylight by the atmosphere and reflected from all objects; its constituent colors revealed by refraction in the rainbow, and in all the varied colors of the earth, the waters, and the sky; and its enlightening, warming, life-sus-

taining, transforming, almost creative energies disclosed by the effects of its continuous action throughout all nature.[1]

Thus the doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in Christ and in redemption through Him and by the Holy Spirit is essential to any worthy philosophical conception of God. As Paul says of Christ to the Corinthians, in every thing, in all utterance and knowledge, ye were enriched in him. Aside from the revelation of God as the Trinity, the human mind has never the conception of the universe in its relations to him, in its comprehensiveness, completeness and unity, but has stuck in one-sided or fragmentary apprehensions. No doctrine of God has so satisfactorily resolved into unity the dualisms and the seeming antinomies arising in every attempt to construct a theory of the universe and to grasp the idea of the absolute, — none has ever so completely comprehended the bipolar and complemental truths in the vast idea of the absolute Being and his relation to the finite, as the doctrine of the Trinity. As to the imagined dualism between God and man, the fact of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself is the grandest revelation of the likeness of God and man, of the eternally human in God and the essentially divine in man, of the intimacy of man's communion with God, of his real union with God, who dwells in man by his Spirit, and of the necessity of the continuous reception of divine quickening and guiding to the right development of any man, and of God's free offer of it, compassing men with his love as the sunshine environs the living and growing plant. And as to the moral unity of the universe, none so fully reveals the law of love as the solvent of all society in unity of character and in mutual trust and service.

[1] The cataract, between the crags deep-riven,
I thus behold with rapture ever growing,
From plunge to plunge in thousand streams 't is given,
And yet a thousand, to the valleys shaded,
While foam and spray in air are whirled and driven.
Yet how superb, across the tumult braided,
The painted rainbow's changeful life is bending,
Now clearly drawn, dissolving now and faded,
And evermore the showers of dew descending!
Of human striving there 's no symbol fuller;
Consider, and 't is easy comprehending:
Life is not light, but the refracted color.

GOETHE, *Faust*, Part II., Act i.; B. Taylor's trans.

II. Historical Confirmation. — The conclusion drawn from the essential elements of the Trinity as revealed in Christ and redemption through him is confirmed by history.

1. It is confirmed by the early history of the doctrine. It was originally developed from the Scriptures in the conflict of Christianity with Greek philosophy and in commending it to the reason of men trained in that philosophy. Christianity established itself in the world in a time of great activity of philosophical thought. There were Epicureans and Stoics, Platonists and Neo-Platonists; there were Gnostics, who regarded God as too pure to defile himself by creating the world or by dwelling in it. All the current forms of Greek and Roman philosophy were earnestly studied and discussed. These philosophies, with whatever errors, held more or less of the truth which abides forever. At Athens certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics had encountered Paul. In his Epistles he warns the Christians against allowing any one to spoil them through anti-Christian philosophy. He warns Timothy to turn away from the oppositions of science falsely so called.[1] Several of the early Fathers had been educated in Greek philosophy. As Christianity was preached throughout the Roman empire, Christian teachers were obliged to meet the objections of these philosophies, to recognize their truths, to expose their errors, to commend Christianity as reasonable to educated and vigorous thinkers and keen inquirers and to gain for it a footing in the best thought of the age. The sublime conflict of Christianity with the persecuting power of the empire and its triumph over it are always and everywhere recounted by the church with thanksgiving and praise to God. But here was the conflict of Christianity with heathen philosophy through those same centuries, scarcely less decisive of the destiny of the church, scarcely less momentous and sublime. In its conflict with these philosophies, rejecting their errors and appropriating their living truths, it prevailed, through the grace of God, by the doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in the God in Christ and the redemption wrought through him. Here was found the conception of God and his relation to the universe, which comprehends and harmonizes his absoluteness and his personality, his unity and his manifoldness, his transcendence and his immanence, his righteousness and holiness and his gracious union and communion

[1] Col. ii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 20.

with men; and which establishes his reign in the human heart, bringing the love of God home to every man.[1]

2. Our conclusion is confirmed also by the history of monotheism apart from the Trinity. Mention has already been made of false views of God as shut up in self-inclusiveness and set apart from man, arising from one-sided conceptions of his transcendence, his simplicity and his absoluteness. The history of monotheism shows the prevalence and the hurtfulness of these one-sided conceptions. A rigid monotheism, excluding the God in Christ and the Christian Trinity, has shown a tendency to rest in half-truths, to entangle itself in contradictions, to separate God in lonely and chilling transcendence from men. It has failed to bring the full richness and power of God into the minds and hearts and lives of men, and to quicken them to love and helpful service to one another or to a proper reverence for man and respect to the sacredness of his rights. This gives some support to the old doctrine of non-Christian philosophy, that monotheism is a doctrine only for the most advanced thinkers; that it is too difficult to be understood by the common people and cannot be safely communicated to them. Mohammedism is an example of this tendency of monotheism. In it God is little more than a blind and irresistible fate, and his service a stolid submission, not to an all-controlling wisdom and love, but to a resistless destiny. It cannot develop and nourish the tenderness and power

[1] Canon Kingsley, in his "Lectures on Alexandria and its Schools," says, "My belief is that they expanded and corroborated Christianity, in spite of great errors and defects on certain points, far more than they corrupted it; that they presented it to the minds of cultivated and scientific men in the only form in which it would have satisfied their philosophic aspirations, and yet contrived, with wonderful wisdom, to ground their philosophy on the very same truths which they taught to the meanest slaves, and to appeal in the philosophers to the same inward faculty to which they appealed in the slave, — namely, to the inward eye, the moral sense and reason, whereby each and every man can, if he will, judge for himself what is right." With this I heartily concur. Dr. Hatch, in his Hibbert Lectures on "The Influence of Greek Ideas on the Christian Church," has presented a one-sided and greatly exaggerated view of the evil influence of Greek philosophy in the early development of Christianity. Even he says, "It helped the Christian community to believe as an intellectual conviction that which they had first accepted as a spiritual revelation" (p. 207). It did much more. It helped the Christian Fathers in their reasonable efforts to attain the essential significance of the revelation of God in Christ and to commend it to the educated minds of the time, by showing that it met all valid demands of reason.

of faith in God and of love to God and man. It develops intense egoism. It legitimately issues in fanatical contempt and exterminating hatred for all of any other religion, and in self-propagation by the sword, in the predominance of the sensual over the spiritual, and in an incapacity to recognize the brotherhood and rights and worth of man as the object of God's love which has naturally issued in the toleration of slavery, polygamy, and despotism. Under Christian civilization the tendencies of a rigid and one-sided monotheism have been exemplified, in different ways, in deism and arid and barren rationalism. Some writers present the religion of the Jews as an example of "stiff and stark monotheism." But this is not true of the teaching of the Old Testament, whatever the later rabbinical teaching may have been. In the Old Testament God reveals himself in the most free communication with his people; he takes the name Jehovah as the memorial of his covenant with them; he describes his relation to them under the names of the most intimate and important of human relationships, — father, mother, husband, king; he is their shepherd, tenderly caring for the feeblest of the flock; and through his prophets he continually points them forward to a new and better covenant, to a larger development of his kingdom and to his more glorious revelation of himself in the Messianic days. Thus the Jews were accustomed to look for the special manifestations of God; while the Greeks were accustomed to seek a philosophical basis for the knowledge of him. In Christ both these lines of thought meet and are comprehended in one.[1]

There is something in the presentation of God merely as the absolute Being which oppresses and depresses. The absolute and the finite are incommensurable. When a man in the consciousness of ignorance, weakness, and limitation feels himself in the presence of the absolute Spirit, his own spirit is crushed by

[1] Modern Judaism denying Christ, in spite of its rich inheritance of the knowledge of God from the Old Testament, tends to a stiff and self-inclusive monotheism, rigid in its exclusiveness towards men. It has before it the alternative either to accept Christ, and so return to its ancient faith as legitimately developed in the knowledge of him, or else to lapse into bald rationalism denying supernatural revelation, as already exemplified in one of its developments. For the Old Testament, if it is not the revelation of God in the preparatory stages of his kingdom which has come in Christ, ceases to be a supernatural revelation of God and becomes merely the fragments of an ancient literature.

the infinite greatness of the being and his immeasurable distance above him. When he sees him as the holy judge, he is conscious of himself as sinful; he is terrified, and, like Adam and Eve in the first consciousness of sin, he would flee and hide himself from God. It tends to fear and separation rather than to reconciliation and loving trust. The tremendous issues of endless existence determined by the man's relations to the infinite God become overpowering. He is in danger of living selfishly for the other world instead of living in loving service of his fellow-men in this. A natural result is the ascetic withdrawing from the world and the devotion of himself in isolated egoism to preparation for the world to come. The thought of the awful greatness of the absolute Being suggests in contrast the littleness and insignificance of man, and so tends to generate contempt for man instead of reverence and a sacred regard to his inalienable rights, to isolate men from one another instead of drawing them into unity in love. This tendency is recognized in the eighth Psalm: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" But the Psalmist, enlightened by the revelation of God's love to men in Jehovah, the covenant God of his people, immediately sets forth the opposite and legitimate inference, the greatness of man as the object of God's loving care, made in God's likeness, "but little lower than God," and exalted to rule over nature and to appropriate its powers and resources in the service of man. Neander says: "The elder Pliny, while absorbed in the contemplation of nature, is lost in admiration of an immeasurable creative spirit beyond all human comprehension, manifesting himself in his works. But his admiration for this exalted spirit of the universe served only to awaken in tenfold strength the depressing sense of the narrowness and vanity of man's existence. He saw nothing to fill up the chasm between feeble man and that unknown, all-transcending spirit. He says: 'What man is, . . . is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion, which has sprung from human weakness and pride, to imagine that such an infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men.'" [1] All these are manifestations in various forms of man's sense of the need of a mediator,

[1] Neander, "Hist. of the Church," vol. i. p. 10; Torrey's transl.

whenever he is conscious of the presence of God in his greatness as the absolute Being.

Dr. Bellows says: "The origin and history of the race exhibits the care with which God has hidden himself away from his creatures in the infancy of their existence, lest they should be scorched and shrivelled in the glory of his presence."[1] He goes on to say that the world must first make or develop the man before the church can save him. But if this author had recognized God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he would have found in the God in Christ the needed mediator, reconciling man to God, and bringing him into free and trustful communion with him. And he would have seen that the true making or development of man is through God's grace in Christ renovating him to the life of faith in God and love to God and man, and not by the world except as it is the medium of his discipline, education, and training in the life of love to the highest perfection of his being.

Comte refers to this depressing influence of mere monotheism, though with exaggeration and misapprehension, as evidence disproving the existence of God and supporting his own theory that humanity itself is the only proper object of worship. He says: "The conception of one single God involves a type of absolute perfection, complete in each of the three aspects of human nature, — affection, thought, and action. Now such a conception unavoidably contradicts itself. Infinite power, on the one hand, and infinite wisdom and goodness on the other, are qualities which cannot be reconciled." And he argues that if such a being should exist, by his very infinitude he would be separated from men and incommunicable to them. He would not only isolate men from himself, but also from one another. He would crush out all altruistic affections. "An omnipotent being can have no occasion for wisdom or for goodness. . . . The principle of omnipotence involves egoism both in the Deity and in his worshipers. . . . His desires being gratified as soon as formed, they can consist of nothing but pure caprices; there can be no appreciable motive either from within or from without. And these obscure caprices must of necessity be purely personal." Hence, Comte infers, the Almighty One must live only in and for himself, and thus would be an example of complete egoism. And in the presence of so great a being, on whose favor the

[1] The Suspense of Faith, p. 19.

eternal destiny of men depends, every man's interest would be concentrated on the future world, and this present world with all its interests would be reduced to comparative insignificance. Thus the tendency would be to shut the man up in egoism, to isolate him from his fellow-men and drive him to monastic seclusion and asceticism. Comte says: "The Christian type of life was never fully realized except by the hermits of the Thebaid. These men by narrowing their wants to the lowest standard were able to concentrate their thoughts without remorse or distraction on the attainment of salvation." He says that Paul, "the real founder of Catholicism," selected Christ from the "army of prophets," "the many adventurers who would at that time be constantly making efforts to inaugurate monotheism, aspiring, like their Greek forerunners, to the honors of apotheosis." He also teaches that Paul and his successors, in what Comte calls the priesthood, developed the doctrines of the God in Christ, of the Trinity, of salvation by grace, of the antagonism of nature and grace, and thus transformed the naked monotheism into Christianity. He teaches that they did this in order to eliminate from monotheism its tendencies to a spiritualistic egoism, to provide recognition of man's altruistic tendencies, and so to make it harmonize with a safe and healthy constitution of society. But he insists that these additions and emendations were not a legitimate development of monotheism and could not remove the evil tendencies inherent in it. Hence he concludes that the altruistic affections can never find their full development till humanity itself is made the supreme object of reverence and devotion.[1]

The extravagance and groundlessness of this theory are sufficiently obvious. But we have in it Comte's testimony to his own conviction that the Christianity actually introduced into the world in the name of Christ by Paul, his coadjutors, and successors, comprised the doctrines of the Trinity, of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, of the sinfulness of man and the necessity of his renewal from the life of nature to the spiritual life of faith and love, and of salvation by faith through God's grace; and that these doctrines were taught in the belief that they would bring man out from his egoism and organize society under the law of love. His objection is not that they do not

[1] Positive Polity, vol. iii. pp. 365, 376, 348, 383, 346, 347, 378, 384, 387; Trans. London, 1876.

have this tendency, but that they are incompatible with the monotheism of Christianity, of which they claim, falsely as he says, to be the legitimate development. And it is the doctrine of the church that the Trinity revealed in Christ is the revelation of God, not shut up in his own absolute Ego, but opening out in creation, ennobling humanity by revealing the essential elements of human personality eternal in himself, — in Christ identifying himself with man, bearing his sins, his sorrow, and his death, in order to save men from their egoism and bring them back to the life of universal love. The secret of Jesus, "he that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," is the revelation that obedience to the law of self-sacrificing love is the only way of blessedness, — that a life of egoism is spiritual death, and the death of egoism is the true spiritual life of faith and love and blessedness; and this is the "life of God in the soul of man."

In the Trinity as revealed in Christ, we see God, Father, Son, and Spirit, reconciling the world unto himself. The reconciliation of man with God is the only effective reconciliation of man with man. Here, then, in the revelation of God in the Trinity, we have the principle of universal reconciliation, of universal harmony and love, to be realized in the kingdom of Christ. This principle is to be realized in the world, not by rules and statutes prescribing the details of duty and forbidding the details of wrongdoing, and contending, perhaps with violence and blood, for their enforcement, — but by the spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love to sinners, taking possession of human hearts, and uniting them with God and with one another through their faith in him, the mediator between God and man. Under his seeking and drawing, men are to return as prodigals to their Father's house and dwell together as brethren. And this principle of reconciliation is to continue working until it brings into harmony under the law of love all customs, laws, and institutions, and society is transformed into the kingdom of Christ.

3. The conclusion is, therefore, alike from the essential elements of the doctrine and from history, that the Trinity as revealed in Christ is the only worthy conception of God, satisfying the demands of reason. A true definition of God must set forth both his absoluteness and his personality, his oneness and his manifoldness, his transcendence and his immanence, his inde-

pendence and his communicableness. It is the endeavor of all religions to find God communicating himself to man, and to bring man into communion and union with God. But it must be the real God, in both sides of his being as the absolute Spirit. The danger is, as history shows, that in grasping one of these, men lose their hold on the other. Hence God is lost in agnosticism, or set apart from man in deism, Mohammedism, or Epicureanism; or he is identified with the universe in materialistic or pantheistic monism; or he is divided and belittled in polytheism; or in recognizing his personality as the one only God, the man loses sight of his absoluteness, and exposes himself to the divine rebuke, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Christianity presents precisely that representation of God which compels us in the very act of taking it into our minds to hold both aspects of his being, as the absolute Being and as the personal Spirit. It illuminates God in his personality and communicableness as Spirit, as no other representation of God does; but it equally illuminates him in the absoluteness of his being, as lightning reveals the cloud on which it crinkles. The mystery in God brought to notice in the Trinity is itself a revelation of him. It reveals his absoluteness and transcendence. The mystery in the doctrine is thus a revelation of reality in God and an element of power in bringing men to reconciliation with him. Thus the very difficulty which the doctrine at first presents to the intellect becomes on further thought a revelation of God and an evidence of the truth of the doctrine itself. And the Trinity as revealed in Christ presents, as no other conception of God does, the full-orbed idea of God as at once the absolute and the personal Spirit. Let it be noted, however, that it is not the mysteriousness in itself which is the power, but the absoluteness and transcendence of God revealed in it, as the background of God's clearest and fullest revelation of himself as personal Spirit, and of his communication of himself to men and of his intimacy with them in love. On the contrary, the very simplicity and clearness of the so-called simple theism, which are urged so confidently as proofs of its truth, are found on further thought to be proofs of its falsity and elements of its practical weakness. It strips God of his majesty, and man of his awe before him. Already in literature some writers are speaking flippantly of the gods, instead of reverently of God. As Dr. Bushnell says, we cannot decoct the whole

mass of God's revelation of himself, "and draw off the extract into pitchers of our own; fine, consistent, nicely-rounded pitchers, which, so far from setting out anywhere towards infinity, we can carry at pleasure by the handle and definitely measure by the eye."[1] Because the revelation of God in Christ is the largest revelation of God, for that very reason it must be the largest revelation of the mystery of his absoluteness and transcendence. Always the larger the area of clear vision, the larger the bounding horizon of the unknown.

[1] God in Christ, p. 69.

CHAPTER X

THE TRINITY: — ITS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In presenting the practical significance of the Trinity I do not refer to the human speculations respecting it, but to the conception of the one only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as revealed in the redemption of men through God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and in the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, and taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto men, as set forth in the Bible. I shall not attempt to define the full practical significance and application of this scriptural revelation of God, because it sheds its own peculiar light on the significance, and penetrates with its own peculiar and vitalizing influence the practical application, of every truth, precept, and historical fact in God's revelation of himself. Therefore I must confine myself to a few points showing its practical power.

I. Christ presents the Trinity as central in the organization, worship, doctrine, and work of his church. A little while before his ascension Jesus came to his disciples and, in a parting charge, gave to them their great commission. He was never given to speculative theorizing, but his instructions had always been intensely practical. Most of all, in these parting moments, when he is committing to them the work of gathering all men into his kingdom, and of organizing, instructing, and building up his church, he will give them in their commission what is essential to the work in its most condensed and comprehensive form. What he does give them is the Trinity. "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and this he gives them as central in the organization, the worship, the teaching, and the work of his church. The only reasonable explanation is that this formula of

the Trinity sums up the essential contents of Christianity and concentres in itself its highest practical power, — that "it is the sum and summit of Christian truth."

It is the central reality on which the church is organized. Baptism is the sacrament of admission to the Christian church. In all ages and nations, whoever enters it is to see the triune name emblazoned over its gateway, and in being admitted into the church is to be baptized into the one name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

It is central in the worship of the church. Baptism itself is worship in its highest form. The confession and consecration involved in it imply that the Trinity is central in all the worship in which Christians evermore express their trust and joy in God who has redeemed them from sin. The other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, was instituted by Christ, to be observed in remembrance of him by all Christians so long as his church shall exist on earth. This sacrament also is worship in its highest form, and of that worship the God in Christ is the centre. All access to the Father is in the name of Christ and under the quickening of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly in all ages the Trinity has been the theme of the benedictions, the doxologies, and the ascriptions of praise in the Christian church.

The Trinity is central in the teaching and work of the church. Christ gives his church the great commission to go into all the world and to preach the gospel. Here he institutes the ministry of the word to be perpetuated in the church through all ages. And all this is in order to make all men disciples of Christ, and to bring them into the church by baptism in the one name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Thus, evermore, as the central theme of all Christian preaching and the condensed but comprehensive formula of the doctrine of redemption which is to be preached, the Trinity is central in all Christian work, carrying the glad tidings of redemption through all the world, and gathering all men into the kingdom of Christ.

It has been a common impression that the doctrine of the Trinity is only a speculative theory, "a scholastic figment," having no practical significance or power. The falsity of this impression is evident when it is seen that Christ presents this doctrine as central in the organization, the worship, the teaching, and the doctrine taught, and the work of the Christian church.

II. The Trinity as revealed in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself gives to Christianity, as revelation, doctrine, and life, its distinctive and essential significance and power.

1. It is essential to the distinctive significance of the Christian revelation. Christianity takes up into itself all truth recognized in the ethnic religions, all that God has revealed of himself through nature, through the constitution of man and the light of reason and conscience, and through man's spiritual environment, which is the all-encompassing presence of God acting on him and presenting himself in his consciousness. But Christianity in its distinctive essence rests on the revelation of God by his action in human history redeeming man from sin, as recorded in the Bible. This action began as soon as man sinned, and culminates in Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit "on all flesh." The God in Christ, God's redemption of men through him, and the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth under his Messianic reign, and the agency of the Holy Spirit sent from the Father by the Son, are the essence of this whole historical action, and ingrained in the biblical record of it, and the conception of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is fully revealed in them, and especially is inwrought into the New Testament.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in Christ gives significance and harmony to the system of Christian doctrines. It is like the keel of a ship, stretching the whole length of the structure, giving support to every timber, and binding the whole structure together.

It has been shown that the denial of this doctrine opens the way to one-sided and erroneous views of God.

It equally changes the conception of man. We lose the ideas of the dignity and worth of man, the sacredness of his rights, the equality and brotherhood of men before God, which Christ has made powers in civilization. We lose also the consecration which Christ has given to human life, and all the inspiration which comes from him to realize the ideal perfection of man in ourselves and to secure it for mankind in the kingdom of Christ. The denial changes also the conception of man as a sinner and of the nature of sin. If Christ is only a man, then man needs only instruction and development; he needs no redemption from sin. Then what we have called sin becomes only a necessary step in his development, and ceases to be sin for which the man

is blameworthy. As a recent Unitarian writer says, the fall of man was "a stumble up the altar-stairs of creation into the light of a new moral universe." Thus the whole conception of God's moral government and of a moral system disappears. Man is not a personal free agent; he is evolved through the necessary processes of his nature like a plant. And the denial of redemption annuls all the doctrines of Christianity involved in the fact of redemption through Christ from condemnation and sin. The central doctrines of atonement by Christ, of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and of justification by faith disappear, and with them all the distinctive doctrines of the gospel of Christ. The proclamation of his coming is no more glad tidings of great joy to all the people.

3. The Trinity as revealed in Christ is of vital moment in the practical experience and work of the Christian life. The doctrine of the New Testament is that the Christian life begins and goes on by faith in the God in Christ. John presents to us Christ as bringing into the world the divine light and life and love, and pouring them on human spirits to illuminate, vitalize, inspire, and transform them. Pre-eminently, it is God's love which is revealed in Christ, quickening and inspiring men to love like his. In this revelation man sees his own sinfulness, his alienation from God, his deserved condemnation, his need of forgiveness and of a mediator between God and himself. In the God in Christ the mediator is revealed, reconciling the world unto himself. In him he trusts. Through him he is justified by faith; he rejoices in the forgiveness of sin, in reconciliation and peace with God; he is transformed into Christ's likeness, inspired with his sacrificial love, the same mind is in him which was also in Christ. His life becomes a life of intimacy with God by faith in Christ, and of self-renouncing service of man in love like his. The motive, inspiration, and strength of his Christian life and work come from God in Christ and through the Holy Spirit redeeming men from sin and reconciling them to himself. As a single example I cite Professor Goltz: "My religious experience, in its origin, preservation, and growth, testifies to the central importance of the person of Christ. . . . The cross of Christ first taught me the hatefulness and curse of my sin. . . . I know no period of great stirring in my inner life, no moment of great influence upon my later course, which has not been essen-

tially a renewed and wider shining forth of the glory hid in the person of Christ, and a time when my heart established some new relation toward him. Whatever in my religious development and experience has not come into living contact with this focus has remained a dead knowledge and opinion, but has grown to no life and no power. My inner knowledge of God, learned not in human schools but in the school of the Holy Spirit, has concentrated itself more and more in the face of Jesus Christ. The more I learn to think, the more does God without him become to me the incomprehensible, the inapproachable, the unspeakable. God becomes all the more distant from me, the more my spirit seeks to convince itself of his reality. In Christ the fulness of life of the invisible Father comes near me as life and love, as holiness and brightness, as a being who never ends, a power ever present, and I find access to the inapproachable. In Christ is solved for me the enigma of my own heart and life, this half-way position between sense and spirit, betwixt bond and free, betwixt the entanglement in sin and death and the destiny to eternal life, between the weak impure beginning and the aim of perfection. The enigmas of the world about me also lose all their mystery, all their oppressiveness for my mind, when I consider them in the light of God's fatherly management of all things, as that is determined in Christ. . . . Only what comes from him, what beams from his hidden glory, only that has become in me light, power, peace, and blessing." [1]

In the moral system as Christ presents it, the ground of the unity of all men is revealed in their common relations to the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. All right character and virtuous action are "rooted and grounded in love," that is, in God's love. They are connected with and nourished by the mighty influences of God's redeeming grace sweeping through the course of human history, vitalizing and advancing the kingdom of God. The denial of the Trinity as revealed in the God in Christ changes the conception of the essential character of the right moral life. It sunders morality from religion; emphasizes man's natural ability and freedom while overlooking his dependence on God; emphasizes man's work of righteousness while overlooking the fact that man's normal development is possible

[1] H. von d. Goltz, "Die Christliche Grundgedanken oder die allgemeinen Principien der Christlichen Dogmatik," § 93, p. 125.

only in union with God through his free and continuous reception of God's prevenient grace and of all the divine influences coming upon and into his soul from God's all-encompassing love. Consequently this denial tends to disintegrate virtue into isolated acts. The great motives and influences which circulate through the moral system from God and vitalize it, which quicken universal love, enthusiasm for humanity and the expectation of human progress to the realization of the kingdom of God on earth, lose their power and ultimately disappear. Instead of the outflow of universal love, morality becomes a doing of duty piecemeal in obedience to the individual conscience. Virtue becomes like a child's flower-garden, cut-flowers stuck in the sand, cut off from all capacity to receive quickening and nourishment from the forces and resources of the great system of nature. But every plant that lives and grows is rooted into the physical system, quickened and nourished by all its cosmic agencies. So every man, as to his spiritual life, is rooted in God's love, quickened and nourished by the mighty influences and agencies of God's grace sweeping through the ages, quickening the spiritual life of individuals one by one, and so vitalizing and developing his kingdom, living and growing in the world like the corn, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Therefore, when we are met with objections and arguments to draw us away from Christ, we must reply in the words of Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68).

Thus it appears that the belief of the doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in Christ and the denial of it do not differ merely on some minor matter of speculation or interpretation. They issue in two radically different systems; and the more fully each is understood and developed the wider the difference is seen to be.

It is objected that pure monotheism, denying the Trinity, has an advantage because the belief of it rests on the constitution and religious consciousness of mankind; and that the belief in the historical Christ, historical redemption, and the Trinity "suspends the burdened heart of the world upon the attenuated thread of historical tradition, which the slightest movement of an all-pervading and restless skepticism may break."[1] The answer is, that the revelation of God in the historical Christ takes up and

[1] Christian Examiner, vol. 65, Nov. 1858, p. 386.

appropriates all truth respecting God and his relation to the world recognized in the religions and philosophies of mankind, develops its true significance and its relation to all God's revelations, and adds the more complete and glorious revelation in Christ. Thus Christianity rests, as solidly as the monotheism which excludes the Trinity, on the manifestations of God in nature and in the constitution and religious consciousness of man, while enlarging this knowledge of God by the historical revelation culminating in Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit. And Christianity does not hang on "an attenuated thread of tradition." It has its roots in history, from the beginnings of history until Christ's coming, and its branches ramifying through history from that time until now. Even according to any school of criticism, the Old Testament was completed centuries before Christ came. It was so pervaded with the Messianic prophecy and promise that the Jewish mind became saturated with the expectation of the Messiah's coming; the prophecy was fulfilled in Christ; and from him the kingdom of Christ opened out into human history with mighty power, and has continued a power in history to this day. Human history itself cannot be accounted for without the historical Christ and the historical kingdom of God on earth.

III. The practical significance and power of the Trinity, as revealed in the God in Christ and the redemption of men from sin through him, are confirmed by the common and persistent belief of it in the Christian church through all the ages.

Neander says: "The economico-practical doctrine of the Trinity constituted from the beginning the fundamental consciousness of the church. . . . It is this which forms the basis of the true unity of the church and the identity of the Christian consciousness in all ages." [1]

A decisive evidence of the truth of Christianity is found in the fact that, seeming so feeble at the beginning, it prevailed in face of the tremendous powers resisting it, became the religion of the Roman empire, and has vitalized the progressive civilization of Europe and America to this day. This is equally evidence of the trinitarian doctrine, underlying as it does the doctrine of the redemption of men from sin and their reconciliation with God

[1] History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i. p. 573.

through the God in Christ; because this doctrine in its practical significance has prevailed and persisted with the prevalence and persistence of Christianity.

The argument is not the mere fact that the doctrine has been generally believed, but that it has been believed and been practically powerful in the Christian life, in the face of difficulties which the doctrine presents to the understanding. Abstruse discussions and sharp controversies have arisen in speculative attempts to answer subordinate questions, to frame minute distinctions, definitions and formulas, to give metaphysical explanations and constructions of the doctrine, and these have sometimes resulted in contradictory decisions by councils of different grades. One would think that if anything could lead men to renounce the doctrine, these abstruse controversies would have done it. But the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, in their essential elements and their practical significance, have always maintained the ascendency. When they have been denied and assailed it has led the church to a more explicit declaration of the doctrines and to the declaration that the opposing theories are heresies. Thus these doctrines have flowed on in the great current of Christian thought and life through all the Christian ages and in all Christian countries. From generation to generation they have held their sway, in ages of darkness and in ages of light, in times of corruption and times of reformation, among the ignorant and among scholars. Philosophies have changed, political systems have flourished and decayed, society has lapsed through the changes of 1800 years from Jewish and Roman civilization through medieval darkness to the light of the nineteenth century, yet these doctrines have been always dominant, received by nearly all of every Christian name, received with a devotedness such that multitudes have died martyrs to their faith.

The religious system which rejects these doctrines starts none of these difficulties at first sight. It appears to be very simple and easy of comprehension. It would be natural to expect that it would prevail. Accordingly, in the beginning of the Unitarian controversy in this country, the opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity expected an easy victory. Professor Norton said: "The doctrine of the Trinity and that of the two natures in Christ are doctrines which, when fairly understood, it is impossible from the nature of the human mind should be believed. They involve

manifest contradictions; and no man can believe what he believes to be a contradiction. They are of such a character that it is impossible to bring arguments in their defence and unnecessary to bring arguments against them." [1] Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams: "You and I will live to see the time when every child born in America will be a Unitarian." [2] Rev. Dr. Ellis says: "One who reviews this controversy, even with his prejudices and convictions strongly on the liberal side of it, can hardly fail to be impressed with the seeming coolness, we might almost say the nonchalance, or the superciliousness and effrontery even, with which the Unitarians took for granted that the great change of religious opinion advocated by them could establish itself as a matter of course. Some Unitarians wrote and talked as if in utter amazement that orthodoxy should presume to say a word for itself in arrest of judgment. The most assured and confident and intolerant of the new party did not scruple to declare that orthodoxy was past apologizing for, and ought to retire as gracefully as possible to the moles and the bats." [3] The same has been true in a greater or less degree in all periods when the anti-trinitarian doctrine has been revived. But its advocates have found that success was never possible and the reception of their doctrine was always limited and transient.

This is a significant fact which demands explanation. Unitarians themselves have often called attention to it. One of their writers says: "When we see how much more natural, genial, and beautiful our doctrine is, how much better fitted to ennoble and guide human nature and to give harmony and happiness to life, — when we see, on the contrary, how arbitrary, severe and repulsive the Calvinistic theology is, how its rigid and petty technicalities offend the liberty of reason, while its morose gloom puts a ban on the natural joys of life, how its dogma and spirit vilify man, — contemplating these facts it must awaken our special wonder to observe what a miserable minority of advocates the Liberal Faith has won, and what an immeasurable majority of adherents the Augustinian scheme retains. How is it that the popular religion holds its great place in the world with such rooted tenacity, with such tyrannical vigor, against the apparently

[1] Reasons for being a Unitarian, p. 22.
[2] Christian Examiner, vol. 64, Jan. 1858, p. 87.
[3] Half-Century of Unitarianism, pp. 31, 32, 6, 7.

irresistible objections to it? Why is it that Liberal Christianity advances with such a creeping, faltering pace, notwithstanding its apparently irresistible attractiveness?"[1] The answer cannot be that the prevalence of the trinitarian belief, with its cognate beliefs and practical applications, is due to ignorance or superstition, or to the incapacity to perceive obvious contradictions. For during all the history of the church these beliefs, more than those opposed to them, have had the support of the intellect, scholarship, and culture of the successive ages. On the other hand, the reason cannot be that the opposing doctrines have not had fair and able presentation. Ever since the days of Arius they have from time to time been defended by men of large intellect, culture, and learning, many of them devout men; so that it may reasonably be supposed that every consideration in their defence which can be addressed to the intellect or the heart has been presented in its full significance. Yet the church in the great current of its thought and life has persisted in the trinitarian belief. The only sufficient explanation is that the doctrine in its essential significance is true; that it commends itself to the thinking of the Christian intellect and to the spiritual wants of the Christian heart; that, though at first sight it perplexes the understanding, yet there is in it that which the reason demands and for which the heart in its deepest spiritual needs yearns; on the contrary, that the opposing doctrine, so level to apprehension at first sight, has in its superficial plainness defects which balk the reason in its efforts to apprehend God as the absolute Spirit, and the heart in its deepest spiritual needs and its loftiest spiritual flights.

And this conclusion prominent Unitarians have seemed to accept. Dr. Bellows says: "The theology of Christendom, that theology which is essentially one and the same in all ecclesiastical history — one and the same because probably the only possible form in which the essential paradoxes of Christian truth can be conveyed, one and the same because created by the contact of the gospel facts and records with the human soul, when it was childlike enough to respond to them without an interior attempt at coherency and comprehension — that theology is destined, I suspect, to an eternal existence and to be the permanent apparatus or body of divinity, through which the powers of the

[1] Christian Examiner, vol. 64, Jan. 1858, p. 88.

world to come are to make themselves felt in the world that now is."[1] Dr. Ellis says, referring to the whole Unitarian movement in the first half of this century: "It would seem as if the course of thought and discussion must have satisfied all candid persons bearing the Christian name, that there is a vitality in the ideas or faith of which the doctrine of the Trinity is the more or less happily chosen and adequate expression. Only an amazing self-conceit or an individual self-assertion amounting to arrogance could resolve all the interest which now goes with the doctrine into superstition or falsehood. The doctrine may risk the statement of an error, or it may fail to state the truth on which it fastens with a strong hold. It may pass from the range of the intelligible and the essential to the sphere of the unintelligible and the visionary. But that it has hold of a truth and has always been the means of conveying infinitely more truth essential to the Christian system than it has conveyed error, is a fact which I could not deny without calling in question the providential oversight of God over the church of Christ. . . . During the last fifteen hundred years a proportion of at least nine-tenths of the nominal and actual disciples of Christ have accepted and cherished, as a vital and fundamental Christian doctrine, a tenet of belief expressed by the doctrine of the Trinity. This majority has embraced its full proportion of each class of professed and nominal Christians; of the masses, the simple, the unlearned, the confiding; and of the learned, the inquisitive and the independent thinkers, who have exercised all their utmost individual power of thought and scholarship in connection with this doctrine. About one-tenth of those numbered in the Christian fold may be taken as a fair estimate of the relative proportion of those who have silently or avowedly dissented from all the popular conceptions and assertions of the doctrine of the Trinity. And further, as an expression of individual opinion, I would avow my own mature conviction, that this proportion of nine-tenths and one-tenth is also a fair measurement of what is true and of what is false in all the ideas, scriptural arguments, Christian testimonies and practical bearings identified more or less closely with the doctrine of the Trinity. . . . Anti-trinitarians . . . may profitably study with new zeal that evident fact of gospel-revelation, which does distribute the whole working force and efficiency of the gospel-truth and power

[1] Sequel to The Suspense of Faith, pp. 25, 26.

under three divine methods or agencies, assigned respectively to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That Trinity in unity is in the gospel. It is the gospel. And from my heart I do believe that there is wrapped up in that truth the substance of what is and has been really sought and held in the doctrine of the Trinity." [1]

IV. Historically, the doctrine of the Trinity has been associated with the highest spiritual experience and power of the church; its denial has been associated with the decay of spiritual experience and power.

The denial of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself leads to the denial of God's work of atonement and redemption, of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and of the sinfulness of man and his alienation from God constituting his need of redemption; and some have even denied the fact of sin itself in its essential and distinctive significance. Necessarily, therefore, it precludes all the deep spiritual experience responsive to God's redeeming grace, which in all ages and countries has been distinctive of the Christian life. It precludes all the mighty motives which come from the love of God in Christ, and all the gracious influences flowing from him in the Holy Spirit drawing every man to turn from sin to God in filial trust, and quickening him, thus turning, to live the life of universal and self-sacrificing love in the likeness of Christ; it precludes the possibility of ever joining in the ascriptions and the new song of heaven.[2] In criticising a Unitarian Service Book, issued in 1868, a leading Unitarian newspaper refers to the confessions of sin and the petitions for forgiveness, and exclaims, "What has the courageous piety of to-day to do with such utterances?" Hence Unitarianism does not generate revivals of religion, such as in various forms have marked the history of the Christian church; it has rather, as in the case of Theodore Parker, put itself in opposition to them. It has not entered largely into missionary work at home or abroad. It seeks to reform political and social abuses rather than to renew the heart of man to faith in God and love to God and man. It addresses the cultured rather than the masses. It cultivates the graces of

[1] The Christian Trinity, A Discourse by Rev. George E. Ellis, pp. 5, 6, 7, 13, 14.

[2] Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 9–14.

domestic and social life, the amenities of refinement and elegance. It depends on "sweet reasonableness" rather than on the word and Spirit of the living God. Similar has been the repeated testimony of Unitarians themselves. Dr. Ellis says: "Unitarianism has proved itself inferior to orthodoxy as a working power, a method of presenting and applying the gospel so as to engage the enthusiasm, the zeal, the hearty, devoted service of its disciples in devising eminently Christian schemes and in carrying on great religious enterprises. The coldness with which the orthodox have charged us we have felt, and instead of denying the charge we prefer the grace of frankly acknowledging it." [1] Another writer says: "Unitarianism has made too much account of understanding and will, too little of intuition and spirit. It is essentially an ethical system; and although, unlike the austere monotheism of the Hebrews, it twines the lovely wreaths of sentiment around its iron rods of law, still, when humanity presses against it its warm breasts, a chill strikes through the leaves. With all its noble speech about the dignity of human nature, it has not believed heartily enough in the worth of the 'common people'; notwithstanding its many tender thoughts about the dear God, it hesitates to send the vulgar criminal and the hardened sinner to meet his regenerating kiss. While it has refused to shut the Father out from immediate access to the heart of his child, and has opened the door of the intellect that the Divine Teacher may come in, it is not quite ready to leave its guarded house, to stand under the broad sky, to acknowledge a purely vital connection between God and man, and to trust the currents of celestial influence that are pressing in at every pore of sense, reason, affection, conscience, and soul. Unitarianism lacks organic heat and impulse, the outward abandon Godward which charms the popular heart; nor, for that very reason, has it the comprehensive sympathy with mortal needs which attracts the great body of the obscure and the toiling, the sin-sick and the sad. As its love of God is wanting in enthusiastic fervor, so its love of man is wanting in earnest heroism. Hence it wins neither the worshipers nor the workers; and, however extensive its negative influence in modifying the prevailing theology, it has failed hitherto in establishing itself as a positive and commanding faith." [2] Professor C.

[1] Half-Century of Unitarianism, p. 39.

[2] Christian Examiner, vol. 65, Nov. 1858, pp. 386, 387.

C. Everett, of Harvard University, says: "One does not need to be connected with any branch of the orthodox church to recognize the great debt that we owe to that church in the past, and our great dependence upon it in the present. If we take the history of our country as a whole, we must admit that it has been the orthodox church, under one or another of its forms, that has stood for religion in the past and which represents it at the present time. I do not underrate the work and the power of the liberal churches; but when we look at the length and breadth of our history, these may be almost left out of the account. It is true that in the greater part of our country to-day the strength of the orthodox churches means the strength of religion, their weakness the weakness of religion." [1]

Notwithstanding its deficiencies, Unitarianism has produced powerful advocates of moral, social, and political reform, and many accomplished preachers and writers. It has sought in the constitution of man a foundation for faith in the personal God. It has earnestly declared and defended the harmony of religion with reason, the right to free inquiry and private judgment, the superiority of life to dogma, the mission of love to overleap all limitations of creed and character. The spirit of the age moves in this direction. Whatever Unitarianism has contributed to spread right views on these points, the trinitarian churches gladly acknowledge. We value doctrine as it quickens and guides life. We do not use creeds to stifle thought or to silence reason. All the more on account of the doctrines which we firmly believe and earnestly teach, does our love transcend all limits of sect or party, of condition or race, of character, education, or culture, and embrace all men, not merely as children of a common Father in heaven, but also as sinners like ourselves, for whom Christ died, and to whom, as to us, all the influences and agencies of God's redeeming grace, all the invitations and promises of the gospel, are to be proclaimed. And while believing in God's historical revelation of himself in Christ as recorded in the Bible, we also maintain that religion with the belief in God is rooted in the constitution of man. If not, man could not be the recipient of God's revelation of himself. And we welcome whatever helps to elucidate and vindicate this great truth.

[1] "An Outside View of Revivals," The Forum, August, 1887.

V. The denial of the Trinity has disclosed a tendency to a false rationalism. It tends to fix the attention on abstract truth, philosophy, ethics, rather than on the living God revealing himself historically in redeeming men from sin, quickening them by the Spirit in the new birth to the spiritual life of universal love and progressively developing his kingdom on earth and in the heavenly glory. For, as Gladstone says, "The incarnation brought righteousness out of the region of cold abstractions, clothed it in flesh and blood, opened for it the shortest and broadest way to our sympathies, gave it the firmest command over the springs of human action by incorporating it in a person, and making it, as has been beautifully said, liable to love."

Unitarianism tends to the denial of the formal principle of Protestantism, that the Bible is the rule of Christian faith and practice, and also to the denial of its real principle, the doctrine of salvation from sin through faith in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. In the former of these two tendencies it issues first in simple theism, denying all miracles and ultimately all God's revelation of himself in any real and distinctive significance, and resting solely on naturalistic and rationalistic grounds; and when this tendency is legitimately carried out, it cannot stop in theism, but issues in the loss of all positive belief in the existence of the one only personal God. In the latter of these tendencies Unitarianism legitimately issues in magnifying man's freedom, while overlooking his dependence on God, — in magnifying man's worth and dignity, while overlooking the fact of his wilful alienation of himself from God, — in magnifying the action and power of man, while overlooking the gracious action of God upon him and the need of man's trustful reception of the enlightening and quickening influence of God's love, — and consequently in substituting morality and culture for religion and spiritual development.

1. The real significance and issues of the denial of the Trinity are not usually seen at the outset. The doctrine is denied in order to escape intellectual difficulties in formulating and explaining it, with no thought of opposition to the essential truth and power of Christianity, and with no sympathy with the issues to which the denial tends. Hence those who have made the denial have usually retained, for a time at least, the distinctively Christian conception of God as in or through Christ the redeemer of

men from sin and reconciling the world unto himself. The Polish Socinians debated whether or not divine honors should be rendered to Christ. The Rakovian Catechism declared that those who refused to invoke and adore him were not Christians. Unitarians have not hesitated to call him Saviour, Mediator, Lawgiver, and Judge, "sacrifice for sin," "abolisher of death, "forerunner into eternity, where he evermore liveth to make intercession for us." The Polish Socinians stood fast by the inspiration of the Bible and appealed to it as the final authority. Priestley did the same, reserving to himself the right of interpretation. The early Unitarians of this country believed in miracles and in the authority of the Bible as the revelation of God. In the early stages of the controversy the appeal on each side was to the Bible. Some of their writers have seemed ready to accept the Trinity itself. One writes: "Certainly the doctrine of Trinity, in itself considered, need not in the least disturb our simplest conceptions of the unity of the Godhead. . . . If the persons live and work in harmonious consent of mind and will, as the Sacred Three of the Athanasian creed unquestionably do, there is but one God, supreme and undivided." [1] Another, while denouncing the trinitarian use of the word "person" as an unwarranted human invention, and distinguishing the doctrine of Athanasius from the so-called Athanasian creed, says: "With the Athanasian conception of the Godhead we have no quarrel. As an article of speculative theosophy we have not only no objection, but are willing to confess a speculative leaning toward it. But when it is thrust dogmatically forward as one of the essentials of the Christian faith, as of binding authority, and as Scripture doctrine, we feel it to be a falsity and an offence. . . . We shall have failed to make ourselves understood, if in these criticisms we have seemed to impugn the Christian doctrine embodied in the Trinity. It is only the forced construction of that doctrine in the Constantinopolitan creed, and the claim that any construction of it by any council or creed is of evangelical and binding authority, against which we protest. The belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit embraces and œcumenizes Christendom in one confession. The dogma of tri-personality confuses and divides. The confession is common, the interpretation of it must be left to the individual mind and heart. . . . To us it is the summit of Christian truth.

[1] Christian Examiner, vol. 65, Nov. 1858, p. 374.

We see in it that which specifically distinguishes our religion from all antecedent and contemporary faiths, exactly defining it against polytheism on the one hand, and Hebrew and Arabian monotheism on the other, evangelically dividing it from Persian dualism on this side and Hindu tritheism on that. We see in it the sublimest and completest theory of God: a God whose nature is neither diffracted by multiplicity, nor yet concluded in singularity, who is neither the unconscious All of pantheism, nor the insulated Self of Judaism; a God whose essence is not to be sought in lone seclusion, but in everlasting self-communication, whose being is a unit and yet a process, — a process of which the two associated names, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are the august terms and the perfect methods; a God who allies himself with the finite intelligence by the co-eternal, mediating Word, and reflects himself in human nature, and enchurches himself in human society by the ever proceeding, sanctifying Spirit. So believing, we also join in the reverent and dear ascription: 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'"[1]

2. But whatever may be true of individuals, these tendencies are inherent in Unitarianism as a movement of thought. While it has favored free inquiry and progressive thought in theology, it has failed to make thought conservative and comprehensive as well as progressive.

Unitarianism is an atmosphere of thought rather than a system. It is wont to repudiate creeds and definitions. Yet an eminent Unitarian preacher has recently given a formal and explicit definition of it: "Its very first and fundamental principle, that which distinguishes it from all other religious bodies, and that which is parent of all the results which thus far have been achieved, is the fact that Unitarianism holds to the supremacy of reason over all church organizations, over all books; reason as the method for the seeking of truth, as the criterion as to whether the truth has been found; reason as applied to the facts of the universe and of human experience." Unitarianism as thus presented is much broader and deeper than the mere denial of the Trinity and of the deity of Christ. It avows the sufficiency of human reason to attain all the knowledge of God which is essential to religion and attainable by man. This is the same type of

[1] Christian Examiner, vol. 68, March, 1860, pp. 239, 266, 267.

thought which appeared in the false rationalism of the last century and which is now active in substituting the impersonal, the natural, and the ideal for the personal, the spiritual, and the historical.

The error here is not in the ultimate appeal to reason, but in excluding the conditions essential to the knowledge of objective reality through the exercise of reason. Therefore we must discriminate between false rationalism and the true.

The first defect of false rationalism is that it fails to give due prominence to revelation as an essential factor in all human knowledge, or even overlooks it altogether. God alone has absolute, self-originated knowledge. He knows the universe in its archetype in his own mind before he gives it being in space and time. But man as finite is on the hither side of the created universe and can know it and the realities in it only as they previously act on him in some way and so reveal themselves to him, either by presenting themselves immediately in his consciousness or by effects presented in his consciousness from which he may infer the existence of some cause of a kind already known to him. Our knowledge of material things presupposes that they reveal themselves by acting on us through the sensorium, thus presenting themselves in consciousness, or through effects of past action thus revealing themselves. By thought reflecting on things thus revealed under the guidance of the universal and constituent principles of reason, we ascertain what they are and what are their relations and laws. All physical science rests primarily on the revelation which the world makes of itself by acting on us directly or indirectly, and the action of reason interpreting the revelation. And this is only saying that it rests on the observation of facts. Our knowledge of men as rational presupposes that they reveal themselves as such by their action on us presenting themselves in our consciousness, or by their action in the past communicated to us by testimony or inferred from observed effects. Any imagined knowledge of the physical world or of rational beings, attained by reason and reasoning alone, without their revealing themselves, would be a mere creation of our own minds, a mere subjective idea without objective reality. It is equally true that the knowledge of God presupposes his revelation of himself, either by his immediate action on us, as is assumed in the doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit on men, or by historical action in the

past, known by testimony and by its observed effects. Even the primitive and self-evident rational intuition that some absolute Being exists presupposes the knowledge of beings already existing and exerting power, which, to the intuition of reason, reveal the absolute Being. Any idea of God attained by pure reason, were its attainment supposable, without any previous action of God revealing himself, either immediately or historically, would be a mere subjective idea created by our own minds. Thus J. G. Fichte announced to his class, "To-morrow we will create God." And Kant insisted that the idea of God attained by the pure reason cannot be known to be objectively real, because it has not presented itself in consciousness with any real objective content. And this he insists on, though he equally insists that the idea is necessary to the reason, that the mind may complete its own necessary processes of thought. He afterwards asserts that God does thus reveal himself in man's moral constitution and action, and so gives content in consciousness to the necessary idea. With equal truth he might have added that God reveals himself in the constitution of man as intellect and as free will, both of which are essential presuppositions of moral ideas and character. The universal and constituent principles of reason are themselves the light of the absolute and eternal reason shining in finite minds which are in its own likeness. And the objective reality of the absolute Being is included in the necessary idea of God, which Kant recognizes as a necessary idea of reason, necessary in order that it may be reason. Therefore, God's revelation of himself by his own action is essential to the knowledge of him. If God's revelation of himself is not recognized as essential to the knowledge of him, if the knowledge of God is supposed to be obtained by the subjective reason alone, then no real knowledge of him is possible; we are shut up to subjective idealism as the only true theory of knowledge. It would be an attempt to climb up to God on the ladder of our own subjective thinking, — a ladder resting on our own subjective thought, made up of the subjective processes of our own thinking, and its top resting on nothing beyond our own thought. By such a ladder we can never reach God. There must be the hand of God reached down to us, which we may grasp and so be lifted up; there must be the voice of God speaking in the soul, to which we can respond and so come into communication with him. Thus false rationalism overlooks

the necessity and reality of God's revelation of himself to man, and so can recognize as the ultimate ground of the universe only the impersonal and the unconscious.

A second defect of false rationalism is that it does not adequately estimate man's dependence on God for light and for guidance, his capacity to receive the illuminating and quickening influence of the divine Spirit, and God's readiness to impart these influences to all who willingly receive and follow them. Man in his normal condition is in union with God. God in Christ makes the great revelation of his likeness to man and of man's likeness to God as a rational personal being, of God's love seeking man to bring him into union with himself, of the capacity of the human spirit to be receptive of the divine and, while personally distinct, to be in union with God, so that we can say, with a true and real significance, in the words of Paul, "We are a temple of the living God." [1]

Here we see both the necessity and the significance of the great doctrine of salvation by faith. Faith is the receptive action of man, in which, recognizing his dependence on God and trusting his love, the man willingly accepts Christ as he is offered in the gospel and all the gracious divine influences revealed and offered to men in him. In faith man is willingly and trustfully receptive of God's revelation of himself, and of all the divine influences freely given out of God's infinite wisdom and love to all who are willing to receive them. Thus faith is fundamentally necessary, not to sinners alone, but to all rational creatures, who, as finite, are all dependent on God; not for forgiveness of sin only, but for all knowledge, for all intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, for the right direction and highest efficiency of all the energies. God is our spiritual environment. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." A finite person can thrive in the spiritual life only as he is willingly and continuously receptive of the gracious influences of God, — as a plant can thrive only in the continuous reception of the influences of its physical environment. This willing and trustful reception of God's gracious influence is faith. A right life and normal development are possible to finite persons, whether men or angels or archangels, whether sinless or sinful, only by faith in God. And the glad tidings of the gospel, the great revelation of God in Christ, is that God seeks man to bring

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19.

him back to himself, even though he is a sinner; that God seeks man before man seeks God; that God's gracious influences are always available and sufficient for every one who willingly and trustfully receives them and yields himself to them.

Christian rationalism, the rationalism of Christ, supplies these defects of false rationalism. It appeals to human reason as the ultimate judge of the reality, the contents and the meaning of God's revelation of himself. But it appeals to reason, which recognizes its own dependence on and affinity with God, the absolute Reason, — which recognizes the fact that God reveals himself, and accepts all that he has revealed wherever it finds it, — which seeks the guidance of the ever-present Spirit of God, and willingly trusts and follows his gracious illumination, quickening, and drawing. It is the reason of the Christian man already acquainted with God, receptive of his Spirit, and conscious in his own experience of God's gracious influences upon him and of living communion with him. And here we see the real significance of the common saying that man cannot know God by his "unaided reason."

The principles and spirit of false rationalism with its defects vitalize Unitarianism as a movement of thought. But at different times and in different persons there has been less or more approximation to their full recognition and expression. In the beginning of the rationalistic movement in Germany in the last century, the Bible was acknowledged as containing the true revelation of God. Lessing held that human reason, if it had been given time enough, would have discovered all which can be known of God. The Christian revelation merely accelerated the progress of man in the knowledge of God. Rationalistic interpreters of the Bible rejected miracles. But they attempted to explain them as natural occurrences, and so consistent with the acknowledged authority of the Bible as the revelation of God For example, Christ's miracle of feeding the multitude was explained by saying that the disciples exhibited the food they had brought with them; this led the others to do the same, and the result was a general picnic. A witty reply was that they wrought philological miracles to displace the physical ones. Beginning with the denial of such incidental miracles, they gradually proceeded to the denial of the resurrection of Jesus and of all supernatural revelation. The Unitarian movement in this country in denying the deity of Christ

had already reached a position at which it would naturally deny his resurrection and ultimately all supernatural revelation.

It is doubtless true that this movement was in part occasioned by errors of trinitarian theologians in formulating their doctrines by ramifying distinctions and definitions to extreme minuteness beyond the teaching both of Scripture and of reason, in taking positions tending to tritheism, in decrying human reason as untrustworthy, as if it were superseded and set aside by revelation, in requiring unquestioning submission to the authority of the church, in declaring the sovereign supremacy of God's will unregulated by the truth and laws of reason, in tolerating deistic conceptions of God as the First Cause apart from and transcending the universe and not immanently active and revealing himself in it, so that all his action in it would be occasional irruption and interruption in violation of all law. In the Renaissance, thought was busying itself with literature and art. But it was preceded and accompanied by religious revivals under the lead of "Reformers before the Reformation." The Protestant Reformation, while it protested against the suppression of free thought under ecclesiastical authority, also emphasized the fact of the witness of the Spirit, and thus declared the reality of God's revelation of himself in the consciousness of individuals; it also declared the reality of the historical revelation of himself in Christ by emphasizing the supreme authority of the scriptures, as witnessed by the Spirit, in all matters of Christian faith and practice. Thus the charge that Protestantism was essentially rationalistic and revolutionary is refuted. It was, as fully as any great movement in the history of the church, comprehensive of the three great factors of religious knowledge, the revelation of God in the personal consciousness or experience, the historical revelation in Christ, and the definition, vindication, and interpretation of the same by the reason. But in the second period of Protestantism the witness of the Spirit had receded into the background, human reason was decried, and freedom of thought and of conscience was restrained beneath the authority of the letter of the scriptures declared dogmatically in creeds prescribed by the church. From this issued the rationalism of the last century, which came gradually to deny all revelation of God, whether immediate in personal experience or historical as recorded in the Bible. The result was that the personal God was lost entirely in

pantheistic speculation, or retained only as a creation of subjective thought, or as an unknowable, or as a distant deity between whom and the human intellect as well as the human heart lay "deserts of vast eternity."

The progress of true Christian rationalism has set aside these errors while conserving the truths and facts of revelation and further developing their real significance. It is only false rationalism which, divested of a profound historical sense, cuts itself adrift from the historical and progressive development of Christian theology and in correcting temporary errors rejects also the fundamental truths and facts. When once it is admitted that God reveals himself to men, that he is immanently active in the universe, revealing himself in the ongoing of the physical system, that he exercises moral government over men under the law of love, is active in the courses of human history in establishing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will, that he reveals himself in the conscious experience of individuals in all ages, — then there can be no *a priori* presumption against the continuance of his revelation to its consummation in Christ and the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the Bible, nor against its continuance under the influence of the Spirit through all time. Nor can we determine *a priori* what the methods or the contents of the revelation may be; except only that it can never contradict the universal principles of reason, nor realize any absurdity, nor contradict any truth which God has already revealed.

We have attained the conception of God as immanently active in the universe and in human history, and thus continuously in the most intimate relation with both the physical and the moral systems. In the progress of science man finds the universe everywhere revealing reason like his own, ordering the universe according to the same constituent and all-regulating principles which are laws to his own thinking and energizing. In the constitution of man, moral and spiritual, God is revealing himself in the likeness of man and revealing to man his likeness to God and his capacity to be receptive of the divine. This conception of God removes all *a priori* objections to the possibility of miracles. It permits us to regard them as accordant with the principles and laws fundamental in the constitution of the universe and as incidental to God's action progressively realizing, in harmony with these laws, the ends for which the universe exists. They are

not violations of the laws of nature, but only reveal a supernatural power acting in and upon nature in accordance with its fundamental laws. This immanence of God in the universe and his continuous intimacy with it in all its ongoing, revealing his likeness to men and his care for them, creates an antecedent probability that this revelation of himself will rise to higher forms and will culminate in some transcending revelation of his love to man and of his purpose to bring him into union with himself and into his own moral likeness as the God of love. The God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself is a revelation in the same line with that which he has been making in the physical universe and in humanity, and is its fitting consummation. The *a priori* objections to the possibility of miracles and to the greatest miracle, the God in Christ, arise from a totally different conception of God in his relation to the universe, from the conception of God as transcending the universe so that he is separated from it and excluded from acting in it, and so from revealing himself in it.

When we see that the doctrine of the Trinity comprehends in unity the dualisms and the complemental truths, and solves the seeming antinomies in the idea of the absolute in his relation to the finite universe and his revelation of himself in it, while it saves us from the abyss of pantheism and the nothingness of agnosticism, we are prepared to accept it as the most complete and comprehensive conception of the one only God in all the manifoldness of his being. Here God in his three modes of being is the central source of the threefold efflux of the divine into the human: Light, the absolute Reason that lighteth every man; Life, the energizing will that, as the eternal Word, is forever realizing and expressing in the finite the thought of the eternal Reason and revealing its eternal Light; Love, the harmony of the Will with the Reason, in God's free and eternal purpose, to give full expression in the finite creation to all that is true and right and perfect and good, to give full expression to the thought of his wisdom in the action of his love.

3. This inherent tendency of Unitarianism has been exemplified in the history of the Unitarian movement in this country.

Early in this movement tendencies of this kind were noticed both by its supporters and its opponents. Professor Moses Stuart, writing to Dr. Channing, put on record this prophecy:

"I am well satisfied that the course of reasoning in which you have embarked, and the principles by which you explain away the Divinity of the Savior must lead most men who approve of them eventually to the conclusion that the Bible is not of divine origin and does not oblige us to belief or obedience."[1] A great clamor arose at once, indignantly denying the imputation and denouncing the professor for his uncharitableness and bigotry. But the prophecy was long ago fulfilled. For a considerable period Theodore Parker's doctrine was repudiated by many Unitarians, and all ecclesiastical union with him and his followers was declined. It would be repudiated by few now, except indeed as many seem to have gone beyond him and have no sympathy with his reverence and love for the Bible and his active agency in circulating it. Accordingly, in a sermon, soon after his death, an eminent Unitarian preacher said truly: "He is as a teacher the legitimate fruit of our denomination. He belongs to us, and there is no way in which to deny him. We stand as the extreme logical result of Protestantism; he stands as the extreme logical result of Unitarianism. Draw the line of demarcation as closely as you can, you cannot draw it this side of him."

Dr. Channing early discovered the evil tendencies inherent in the Unitarian system. In 1820 he wrote: "I have told you how much I think Unitarianism has suffered from a union with a heart-withering philosophy. . . . I fear we must look to other schools for the thoughts which thrill us, which touch the most inward springs and disclose to us the depths of our own souls." In 1839 he wrote: "I would I could look on Unitarianism with more hope. But this system was a protest of the understanding against absurd dogmas, rather than the work of deep religious principle, and was early paralyzed by the mixture of a material philosophy, and fell too much into the hands of scholars and political reformers; and the consequence is a want of vitality and force, which gives us little hope of its accomplishing much under its present auspices or in its present form." In 1841 he says: "With Dr. Priestley, a good and great man, I have less sympathy than with many of the orthodox. . . . I am little of a Unitarian. I have little sympathy with the system of Priestley and Belsham. . . . Old Unitarianism must undergo important modifications or developments. This I have felt for years. Though an advance

[1] Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 141.

on previous systems and bearing some better fruit, it does not work deeply, it does not strike living springs in the soul. This is perfectly consistent with the profound piety of individuals in the body. But it cannot regenerate the world. No matter how reasonable it is, if it is without power." [1]

Similar is the testimony of Mrs. Sarah A. Bradford Ripley: "Yesterday being Sunday, Mr. —— preached; and I felt more than ever how fast I am receding from the church of which Unitarianism is the exponent; and that is the only manifestation of its power with which I am familiar. We must have the life of God in the soul. If we find it in the church, how venerable in its environment of olden time! But we eschew the church when it is only a mask to cover the want of it. Mr. —— preached from the text, "O wretched man that I am," &c. (Rom. vii. 24, 25). How the bucket of the gentleman danced up and down on the surface of that deep well of spiritual life from which the saints have in all ages drawn living water." [2]

From Dr. Channing's day till now, Unitarianism has been remarkable for its continual criticism of itself. Dr. Bellows describes the process by which his denomination has been passing to "The Suspense of Faith." After saying that Unitarianism originated in an attempt to effect a better adjustment between the theology of Christendom and the spirit, culture, and politics of the last century, he says: "It accordingly began to compare the theories and doctrines of Christendom with the letter of the written scripture, and by and by with the less legible but elder scripture of human reason or natural conscience. In this process, in which by degrees tradition and the integral quality of history and the common consciousness of the church became disowned, the gospel of Christ gradually resolved itself into a philosophy, — high, noble, pure, but intellectual, cold, and dreary, — a philosophy in which at first only the old forms, dogmas, symbols, and rites of the church were discarded as refuse or slag, and in which at last the history and records and personality of Christianity were thrown off, as accidental or even excremental, or at any rate as non-essentials of a system which had yielded its secret and soul to the crucible of metaphysical and scientific analysis, and now stood simplified and condensed in the phials

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii. pp. 97, 394, 380, 381, 399.
[2] Memoir, in "Worthy Women of Our First Century," p. 166.

of social philosophy. . . . here in George Combe's 'Constitution of Man,' there in Newman's book on 'The Soul,' now in Morell's 'Philosophy of Religion,' then in Parker's 'Discourse of Religion.' . . . It was not deliberate and cold-blooded. It was forced on its agents by necessity, by the logic of events, by internal and irresistible laws of the mind and of the age. One step involved another. . . . As brave men descend into a well to save lives that are perishing in its exhausted atmosphere and are themselves drawn out half dead, they ascended into the thin and chilling air of mere religious philosophy, in hopes of proving that men incapable of living where they were, could breathe and live there; they hoped to find, in the roomy chambers of 'the vague immense,' attractive, safe, and wholesome quarters for an unbelieving and undevout humanity, on which the church had lost its hold, and to which it gave no shelter. But they had forgotten how weak, how mortal, how domestic Humanity is; how narrow the boundaries of its proper self-reliance, how hemmed in by history, how dependent on tradition, how circumscribed by experience, how tended and folded by God's providence, and lodged and fed within his own house. They had not known how congenitally adapted to mortal wants is a positive revelation, an historical religion, an incarnated Divinity, an external apparatus of doctrines and symbols possessing authoritative quality, tangible shape, and positive testimony. These, the imagined obstacles, were actually the essentials of a religion; the absolute conditions of any common faith or worship among men; the sole basis of religious institutions, and the only means of any organic and continuous religious influence."[1] In an Address before the Alumni of the Harvard Divinity School, in 1859, he says: "Why is it that the moment we find ourselves in possession of men whom genius, character, and scholarship fit to lead us in our logical career to new victories and the extension of our faith, they almost uniformly become paralyzed by doubts and scruples, and lose their interest in the progress which they might assure? It is simply because the small elevation which gives them command of us, reveals to them the absence of any more road in the direction we have been going. Not brave enough or quite clear enough to announce this, they allow themselves to seem smitten with sudden indifference to their former interests, and leave the

[1] Sequel to The Suspense of Faith, pp. 21–24.

rank and file to blunder on and find out the truth for themselves. Of later years this has been our almost constant experience as a body."[1] And he says emphatically: "The time has arrived when Unitarianism has this option, either to turn into Rationalism and essential though devout and pure Infidelity (which in one of its wings it threatens to become), or to turn more decidedly into the church, carrying its wealth with it, to find there its home and the ideas and influences it has missed in its earnest and honest exile."[2]

Unitarianism, in its most advanced development at the present day, would receive into its fellowship as Unitarians those who have lost all belief in a personal God. Rev. J. H. Allen, Lecturer on Ecclesiastical History in Harvard University, in his "Three Phases of Modern Theology," says: "One may distinctly rule out from his belief everything that is technically supernatural; yet it is free to him, if he will, to profess himself a Christian and claim the fellowship of his birthright Church." Since God is technically and in every true sense supernatural, the language implies that an atheist may properly claim to be a Christian, and is to be recognized as such by the Unitarian churches. The same is the view avowed by the Western Unitarian Conference. This Conference, when organized, took its stand as a distinctively Christian organization. But the influence of the Free Religious Association, organized in Boston some years ago, extended westward. In 1875 the Conference adopted a proposition definitely changing its basis, dropping the word Christian and welcoming to fellowship all who would work to promote "the kingdom of God." In 1886, at the meeting in Cincinnati, a resolution, declaring the purpose of the Conference to be "to promote pure Christianity," was voted down. Another, declaring its object to be to promote a religion of "love to God and love to man," was also voted down, the objection to it being that the word God is "dogmatic." Then the Conference adopted a basis for itself distinctively and solely ethical. At the meeting in Chicago, in 1887, the subject came up again, and after discussion the Conference reaffirmed its action, declaring its welcome to "all who wish to join us to help establish truth, love, and righteousness in the world," with the only qualification that the resolution is "to

[1] The Suspense of Faith, p. 23.
[2] Sequel to The Suspense of Faith, p. 20.

be regarded only as the thought of the majority." Thus, in spite of the earnest opposition of the more conservative members, the Conference established itself on a distinctively ethical basis. But ethics without God is a very uncertain and indefinite thing, — like an astronomy of the solar system with no recognition of the sun. So far Unitarianism has advanced beyond the absolute religion of Theodore Parker, with its three doctrines of God, his moral law and immortality, which was as repugnant to the conservative Unitarians of his earlier ministry as the exclusion of belief in God from the basis of fellowship is to the conservatives of to-day. Thus, while proclaiming the worth of life above dogma, these extremists have reached the point where mere intellectual skepticism supplants both religious doctrine and life. While proclaiming the right of free thought and private judgment, they have pushed individualism to the extreme in which the religious thought of each person is disintegrated from that of every other, as well as from that of the Christian community; and the religious belief and life of the present are cut off from the vital growth and development of the past. There is full justification of the words of Ralph W. Emerson: "Luther would have cut his hand off sooner than write theses against the Pope, if he had suspected that he was bringing on with all his might the pale negations of Boston Unitarianism." [1]

VI. The Christian conception of God meets spiritual wants disclosed in all religions, and realizes ideas for which the ethnic religions have been and are groping.

The idea of God has been held in three forms: the One, the Many, and the All. Monotheism recognizes God as the one absolute and personal Spirit. Polytheism recognizes God in the diversity of his powers as revealed in the universe, but fails to see his unity in them all. Pantheism makes God the All. Here human thought, seeking to define God as immanent in the universe, identifies him with it. Seeking to declare the oneness of God in all his varied manifestations in the universe and the union of God with man, it overleaps its goal and sinks in the morass of pantheism. God, identified with the universe, is lost in the impersonal and the unconscious; man, becoming only a mode of

[1] "The Sovereignty of Ethics," N. American Rev., May and June, 1878, p. 415.

the existence of God, loses his individual personality and his moral freedom and responsibility. Christianity has superseded all three by taking up the truths of each and comprehending them in unity in itself.

Religion consists in the communion of man with God, necessarily implying God's revelation of himself to man and communion with him. All religions strive more or less consciously and intelligently for the perfect realization of this communion. Mohammedism and deism, holding the simple and rigid unity of God, fail to know him in his varied powers and manifestations, in the pervasiveness of his presence and action in the universe, in the fulness of his love to men and the intimacy of his communion with them. Polytheism, recognizing a deity in every power of the universe, disintegrates the manifestations and fails to apprehend the oneness, the majesty and the love of the one absolute Spirit. Its profound thinkers, however, have passed behind the multitude of gods and have recognized the one absolute Being, and, at least since the time of Anaxagoras, have from time to time recognized it as the supreme and absolute Reason. Pantheism destroys all foundation of the possibility of religion, because it is impossible for man to have communion with the impersonal and unconscious, by whatever name it may be called. Christianity alone, in its revelation of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and therein of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, comprehends God in all his varied aspects, — as the one absolute Spirit, as energizing in the universe and immanent in it, and as the God of love, in Christ reconciling men to himself, and dwelling with them in loving intimacy in the Spirit of Holiness. Thus in the ethnic religions men disclose the consciousness of spiritual wants which Christianity alone can satisfy, and are groping after a God whom Christianity alone clearly reveals.

Accordingly we commonly find in the more developed ethnic religions a triad of principal divinities; three Heads of all the deified powers manifested in nature and in humanity. We find also incarnations of the divinity, especially in the East, and various appearances of a divinity in human form. It is objected that these are not identical with the Christian conception of God in the Trinity and in the God in Christ. This is true. But it does not invalidate the argument. It is only in God's redemption of men in Christ that he is fully revealed as the one God, Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit, and as the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us. We therefore do not expect to find it fully revealed in the ethnic religions. The argument is merely that in these religions men have become aware of spiritual needs which only the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, revealed in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, can satisfy, — and find in nature and in man indications which point in the direction of the distinctively Christian conception of God.

Dr. Dorner suggests that in the oriental religions the thought begins with the divine — and God is conceived as coming down to man in incarnations — finally losing itself in pantheism. In the Western religions thought begins with man and conceives of him as elevated to God; it issues in the deification or apotheosis of great men. In the East, God becomes man; in the West, man becomes God. Both seek the same end, the union and communion of man with God. But both failed to reach this end. In the East, man's receptivity of the divine, held in a one-sided way, excluded the freedom, activity, and development of man. His religion was meditative and ascetic, an inactive resignation and quietism; his philosophy was pantheism, with no basis for the free personality of either God or man; on earth he was content with supine inactivity under despotism, caste, and unchanging custom; for the future life he was satisfied with the expectation of absorption into the absolute and the extinction of his conscious personal being. In the West, man's personality was held in a one-sided way, overlaying his receptivity from God and implying his sufficiency for himself. The result was consciousness of freedom, vigor of thought, energy of action, self-sufficiency, man deifying himself. He could never be content with the absorption of his conscious personality in the absolute. Yet the issue of this one-sided development in self-sufficiency was the coming of the Cæsar and his deification, the enslavement of the western world under despotism, and the loss of God, either by separation from man in Epicureanism or by identifying him with the universe in pantheism. Man deified the world and sought his blessedness in it. Christianity comprehends in unity both of these one-sided conceptions. God comes down to man to lift man up to God. Man is receptive of the divine by his own free trust in God, and is quickened by God to the highest development of all his capacities and the highest exertion of all his energies in love and its

willing and self-sacrificing service. Thus man becomes a worker with God in establishing the kingdom of God on earth.

Similar indications pointing to the Christian conception of God are found in philosophy. From Plato to Hegel, philosophy at different times has sought the rational theory of the existence and constitution of the universe in some sort of a Trinity.

Bancroft, the historian, has said that some idea of the triune God "is inherent in every system of thought which can pretend to vitality."[1] Coleridge says: "The Trinity is the only form in which an idea of God is possible, unless it be a Spinozistic or World-God. . . . I affirm that the article of the Trinity is religion, is reason and its universal formula; and that there neither is nor can be any religion, any reason, but what is, or is an expansion of, the truth of the Trinity."[2] It is now evident that there is a truth in these seemingly extravagant assertions. The history of religion, and of theological and philosophical thought has shown that the Trinity and the Incarnation present a conception of God necessary to satisfy spiritual wants which all religions have more or less clearly disclosed, and to meet the demands of reason in every attempt to construct a theological or philosophical theory of the universe in its relation to God. The triads and incarnations of the ethnic religions and philosophies disclose, even in man's dimmer apprehensions of what God reveals himself to be, some consciousness of him as being what in Christ he is more clearly and fully revealed to be.

VII. The truth of the doctrines of the God in Christ, and of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is independent of the philosophical and speculative questions respecting them which have been discussed within the church, and of the failure to attain agreement in answering these questions. The revelation of the God in Christ, and of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, underlies the whole revelation of God as the redeemer of men from sin, and is inseparably connected with it. It is thus inwrought into the essence of Christianity. Hence these doctrines, as thus revealed in the Scriptures and in their practical significance as connected with redemption, have been the common belief of the church in all ages. The truth of these doctrines has

[1] Christian Examiner, vol. 69, September, 1860, p. 213.
[2] "Literary Remains," Works, Shedd's ed., pp. 36, 404.

not been the question at issue in the controversies which have arisen within the church. These have pertained to attempts to give more exact definitions and formulas, to explain how the divine and the human are united in Christ, or how the three exist as one in the eternal being of God; while on both sides of the controversy the aim has been to elucidate the doctrines, to remove objections, and to vindicate them as true.

Theologians distinguish between the ontological or immanent Trinity as eternal in God independent of his revelation of himself, and the economic or practical Trinity as revealed in the scriptures in its practical significance as related to redemption. It may be objected to this distinction that what God reveals is himself; and the Trinity revealed must be the Trinity that God eternally is. But the distinction, rightly apprehended, is between the Trinity so far as revealed and the idea of the Trinity as formed by the human mind, when in reflective thought it goes behind the revelation and attempts a metaphysical construction of the Trinity as it is eternal in God, or a picturing of it in the imagination. The results of such attempts are speculative theories as to the ontological Trinity. But every revelation of God must be on a background of mystery. No finite mind can completely comprehend God. The revelation of God in Christ, and of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, opens a deeper insight into the essential being of God and his relations to man than any other revelation. For that very reason it discloses to us more fully the mystery of his being. Therefore, though all attempts to picture God, as thus revealed, in the imagination, or to define him with exactness and completeness, or to answer all speculative questions which may be asked, may fail, God so far as revealed may still be apprehensible, and the revelation may be real, far-reaching, and of great practical power.

A similar distinction must be made between Christ the Son of God and the Son of Man, as revealed in the work of redemption, and conceptions of him arising from attempted psychological constructions of his person as human and divine. Attempts at such construction have been common in the history of the church. They have been the occasion of discussion and controversy within the church, which continue to this day. But in all this theorizing and discussion within the church, it has not been disputed that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. There

has been a general agreement in recognizing the union of the human and the divine in the person, Jesus the Christ. The difficulty has been how to construct his person in thought. But in whatever way it has been constructed, the belief in the God in Christ has remained unchanged. The history shows that neither one theory nor another of constructing the idea is essential to the doctrine in its scriptural and practical significance.

The common doctrine of the church has been, that Christ is one person having two natures, the divine and the human. The question is, What person is it that presents himself in Christ? Is it God, or man?

It cannot be a human person, a particular man, named Jesus. This is an ancient error, controverted in a short paper of doubtful genuineness, attributed to Athanasius, and bearing a title similar to one of his genuine writings. The writer says of this error: "They who say this contradict the Word (Logos), since they say that a Son of man, not descending from heaven but arising from the earth, received God descending from heaven into himself." [1] Moreover, any possible union of God with him would be a union with only one man, not with humanity. And further, if the person presented in Jesus was a human person, then, however richly endowed, he could never become God, but must remain in every action and through all his history, always a man; for it is impossible for one person either to be transformed into another, or united with another in one person; and God cannot impart his absoluteness to a man, because that would be the absurdity of creating a second God. Jesus then would be a man distinguished from other men only by a higher prophetic inspiration and richer spiritual gifts, and incompetent for the work of God in Christ redeeming men from sin. This, therefore, involves the denial that he is divine, except in the sense in which all men are so, being in their personality in the likeness of God. Thus it logically leads to the Socinian doctrine that Christ is a mere man.

On the other hand, it may be supposed that the person in Christ is God, in that eternal mode of his being in which he is revealed as the Logos, the Word, or the Son. The danger here is that in this conception the human in Christ may be displaced by the divine or lost in it. Accordingly Docetism appeared early

[1] "On the Incarnation of the Word (Logos) of God," Works, vol. iv. p. 91. Ed. J. P. Migne; Paris, 1857. Patrologia Græca, vol. xxviii.

in the history of the church, affirming that Christ's body and all the human sensibilities through which man suffers had no reality, but were merely illusive appearance. Apollinarianism, on the other hand, recognized the reality of Christ's body, with all its natural sensibilities, but denied the existence in him of a rational spirit. From these facts, as well as from the whole history of the early Christian church, it is evident that it was the deity of Christ rather than his humanity which made the most powerful impression on the primitive Christians. In opposition to the two errors of Docetism and Apollinarianism, the church in its creeds declared the existence in the Christ of "a true body and a reasonable soul." But throughout the whole history, the common belief of trinitarians has been that in some way the one person of Christ is the Logos, or Son of God.

Some in our own day have propounded a doctrine essentially the same with Apollinarianism. This arises from confounding the human nature predicated of Christ in theology with a distinct human person. A rational human spirit, as it exists in a man, is itself the person of the man. Therefore, it is argued, personality is of the essence of the human spirit or soul; if impersonal, it would not be a spirit or soul. Thence, it is inferred that if Christ has a rational human soul and is at the same time the Son of God, he is no longer one person, but two. Then the Logos or Son of God, is recognized as the one person in Christ to the exclusion of a rational human soul.

This conception of Christ really divests him of human nature in its higher attributes as rational free spirit, and regards him as God acting only through a human body. This annuls every conception of Christ as at once human and divine. It therefore excludes all the significance of Christ as the revealer of man as well as of God, and as revealing the essential likeness of man to God. And it does not remove the difficulty. There is more difficulty in conceiving of God as incarnate in a mere material body than in a complete human nature. It is only the likeness of man in his higher nature to God which makes the incarnation possible. God cannot impetrify himself in a stone, or indendrify himself in a tree, or incarnate himself in mere living flesh, as in an oyster. God as a spirit cannot become matter. Therefore, by adopting the Apollinarian theory, nothing is gained and new difficulties are created.

But it is not necessary to resort to this theory. The doctrine of anhypostasia, commonly held by the Reformed churches, presents a more scriptural conception of the person of Christ, and more effectually removes the difficulty. Trinitarians who reject it, commonly show that they have not apprehended its real significance. It is commonly spoken of as the doctrine of the impersonality of Christ's human nature; and this is misunderstood as denying that he is human. But, in fact, the doctrine does not deny that Christ is human, but strenuously affirms that the one person, Jesus Christ, is both divine and human; in one aspect this one person is divine, having all the attributes essential to personality in God; in another he is human, having all the attributes essential in human personality. For it must be remembered that personality is not the person, but is only the name of the abstracted qualities or nature which constitute a being personal, and that absoluteness and finiteness are not of the essence of personality, but only different forms in which personality may exist. The doctrine simply denies that Jesus ever existed as an individual man, a human person before the incarnation, but asserts that he is a human person in and through the union of the divine with the human in the incarnation. In this the two natures are united, as the Council of Chalcedon declared, "indivisibly and inseparably." This doctrine has been designated by the Greek words, *anhypostasia*, as denying Christ's human personality antecedent to and apart from the incarnation of the Logos, and *enhypostasia*, as asserting his human personality in the incarnation of the Logos.[1]

[1] Athanasian Creed: "Who, although he is God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by assumption of the manhood into God. One altogether; not by conversion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

Turretin: "By the intimate and perpetual conjunction of the human and divine natures into the unity of a person, the human nature, which was destitute of a personality of its own and *ἀνυπόστατος*, because otherwise it would itself have been a person, was taken up to the person of the Logos and conjoined or adjoined to it into the unity of a person, so that now it may be *ἐνυπόστατος*, since it has coalesced into one person with the Logos. . . . The union is effected by the assumption of the human nature into the oneness of the person of the Logos." — Instit. Loc. xiii., Quaest. 6, VI. and III.

Buddaeus: "The human nature, destitute of all subsistence in itself subsists in the subsistence of the Logos. . . . By this union of the two natures,

The thought will, then, be as follows: God, in the Son, creates the universe and thus brings into being reality other than himself. He energizes in the creation, preservation, and evolution of the universe, and thus is continuously and progressively expressing his thought therein in the finite, in the forms of space and time. He reveals himself in the physical system. He makes a higher revelation of himself in the spiritual system, every person in which is, as personal, in the likeness of God. In the fulness of time, when the world is prepared for it, he reveals himself in Christ. The Word or Son of God creates a germinal human being that would have developed into a man rational and personal. But, instead, the divine Son or Word takes possession of the germinal organization thus created, and from the beginning acts in and through it under the limitations and conditions of a human nature. But the personal nature or essence of God is the same in kind with that of man. And acting in Christ through a human organization and under human limitations and conditions, it is also the same in the form of its manifestation. Thus it is at once divine and human. And the two are the same in essence and in form. Thus Christ is the God-man. God, the Son, is the person energizing and revealing himself in him, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Thus Christ in all his words and actions and character is the exponent to us, under human forms, of the thought and heart of God; and he manifests the divine more and more as in

the divine and the human, by which the divine takes up the human, destitute of all subsistence in itself, into its own person (hypostasis) and unites itself most closely with it, it comes to pass that one person, the God-man, results." — Lib. iv., ch. ii., §§ 6 and 7, pp. 743, 744.

Richard Hooker: "It pleased not the Word or Wisdom of God to take to itself some one person among men, for then would that one have been advanced and no more; but Wisdom, to the end she might save many, built her house of that nature which is common unto all; she made not this or that man her habitation but dwelt in us. . . . If the Son of man had taken to himself a man now made and already perfected, it would of necessity follow that there are in Christ two persons, the one assuming and the other assumed; whereas the Son of God did not assume a man's person unto his own, but a man's nature to his own Person." — Eccles. Polity, Bk. v. lii. 3.

Samuel Hopkins: "The human nature which this divine person, the Word, assumed into a personal union with himself, is not and never was a distinct person by itself: and personality cannot be ascribed to it and does not belong to it any otherwise than as united to the Logos, the Word of God." — Works, vol. i., p. 283.

his growth from infancy to maturity he becomes more and more capable of being the medium through which God manifests himself. At the same time he has every attribute of a pure humanity, both of a true body and a reasonable soul. And he reveals the fact that personality in its essential elements is the same in man and in God; and that man through God's love may attain also to the moral and spiritual likeness of God in character, in love such as God has revealed in Christ. Thus, in Christ uniting himself with human nature and acting through it and under its limitations and conditions, God makes his highest and fullest revelation of himself to mankind.

The supposition that God reveals himself through "the one mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus," involves no difficulties different in kind from those inseparable from every attempt to picture God or to construct a definite idea of him in his action in creating or in any revelation of the absolute Being in the finite. And the Son of God, thus revealing himself in Christ, does not cease to be God energizing elsewhere throughout the universe any more than when energizing in the sun he ceases to be God energizing elsewhere throughout the universe. Athanasius says: "If the Logos of God is in the world, which is a body, if he is immanent in all and every thing, is it incredible or absurd if we assert that he is also in man? If it is absurd that the Logos exists in a body, it would be absurd that he should exist in the universe and illuminate and move it by his providence. But if the Logos can exist and be known in the world, then there is no inconsistency in his appearing in a human body and its being illuminated and having its powers of action from him." And he compares the Logos or Son of God in Christ, while at the same time acting throughout the universe, to the spirit of man which acts throughout the whole body, yet specially and pre-eminently reveals itself through a single organ — that is, the tongue.[1] The Athanasian Creed refers to the union of body and spirit in the one person of a man as analogous to the union of the divine and human in Christ. In this union in a man's own person, the human spirit acts and reveals itself in the physical organization, which as material is not the

[1] Oration on the Incarnation of the Logos, §§ 17, 41, 42; Works, vol. i. in "Patrologia Graeca" (Migne), vol. xxv. This is the genuine work of Athanasius bearing this title.

same in kind with itself. Were we not familiar with this union in ourselves, it might be more difficult to conceive of it as possible than it is now to conceive of the union of the divine and the human in Christ, in which the Son of God unites himself with humanity and acts in and through a human nature, which, so far as it is personal, is the same in its essential attributes with his own nature as personal.

We now see the true significance of the doctrine of the *ἀνυποστασία*, that Jesus was never a human person antecedent to and apart from the incarnation, but only in the personality of God incarnate in him (*ἐνυπόστατος*). This also gives the real significance of the kenosis or self-emptying of the Son or Word of God. The doctrine would mean that in the humiliation the God in Christ exercised all the powers which constitute the essence of his personality, but under human limitations and conditions. It is not that he ceased to be the absolute Being; but that in the humiliation in Christ he acts in and through the human organization which he had created as the medium of his highest revelation of himself, and under the conditions of humanity.

I do not deny or depreciate whatever of value has accrued from the attempted philosophical constructions and explanations of the incarnation and the Trinity and from the controversies respecting them within the church. But the history of these discussions has at least shown that complete agreement is not to be expected on some of the questions which have been under debate, and warns us against fruitless speculation. And from what has been said it is evident that the truth of the doctrines in their scriptural and practical significance is independent of the philosophical questions respecting them which have been discussed within the church and of the failure to attain agreement in respect to some of them. Therefore I shall not enter into further consideration of these questions. The words with which Calvin closed his discussion of the Trinity in "The Institutes" are always pertinent. "Finally I trust that the entire sum of this doctrine has been unfolded, if indeed the readers impose some limit of moderation on their curiosity and do not call up troublesome and perplexing questions more eagerly than is fit. I do not in the least expect to satisfy those who are carried away in intemperance of speculation. I certainly have not craftily passed by anything which I might suppose opposed to me; but, while I study the edification

of the church, I have purposely left untouched many points which are of little practical importance and would only cause useless perplexity to the readers." [1]

The difficulty in believing these doctrines arises in great part from the stupendous greatness and glory of the revelation of God in them. We have noticed the law of the universe, that the highest goes down to the lowest to lift it up. But when we are told that God descends to humanity, and even to sinful humanity in the humiliation, it seems too much to believe. Christ was predicted as the sun of righteousness rising. We watch the dawning light, waiting and hoping for the coming of the sun. The arch of light rises; the darkness is crowded toward the west; the hill-tops are illuminated; the valleys are filled with light. But when the sun begins to lift itself above the horizon and its level rays strike our eyes, we are dazzled and blinded with excess of light. So it is when Christ, the sun of righteousness, rises and pours on human eyes the glory of the present God.

> "'T is thus when, unto yearning hope's endeavor,
> Its highest wish on sweet attainment grounded,
> The portals of fulfilment widely sever;
> But if there burst from those eternal spaces
> A flood of flame, we stand confounded ever;
> For life's poor torch we sought the shining traces,
> And seas of fire — and what a fire — surprise us." [2]

In order to believe the revelation of God in Christ and in the Trinity we need to attain a more profound and practically dominant conviction that the fundamental reality in the universe is the spiritual; that God is immanent and active everywhere in it; that in his personal and spiritual being man is like God and, constitutionally and aside from sin, is in affinity with him; that "God is not far from every one of us;" that his love, seeking the lowest, is without measure; and that his coming into humanity in Christ is only the legitimate expression of love which is divine. Therefore Paul prayed for Christians in his day, that they might be lifted above the range of sense into spiritual vision: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what

[1] Institutes, Bk. i. chap. xiii. 29.

[2] Goethe, "Faust," Part ii. Act i.; Werke, vol. ii. Ed. Stuttgart & Tübingen, p. 411.

is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to that working of the might of his power which he wrought in Christ." [1]

I close this chapter in the strong words of Dr. Bushnell: "To hold this grand subtonic mystery, in the ring of whose deep reverberation we receive our heaviest impressions of God, as if it were only a thing jus' receivable, not profitable; a dead truth, not a living; a theologic article, wholly one side of the practical life; a truth so scholastic and subtle as to have in fact no relation to Christian experience; nothing, we are sure, can be less adequate than this, or bring a loss to religion that is more deplorable, unless it be a flat denial of the mystery itself. In this view we cannot but hope that what we have been able to say may have a certain value. . . . preparing some to find how glorious and blessed a gift to experience, how vast an opening of God to man, how powerful, transforming, transporting, this great mystery of God may be. We can wish the reader nothing more beatific in this life than to have found and fully brought into feeling the practical significance of this eternal act or fact of God, which we call the Christian Trinity. Nowhere else do the bonds of limitation burst away as here. Nowhere else does the soul launch upon immensity as here; nowhere fill her burning censer with the eternal fires of God, as when she sings,

> One inexplicably three,
> One in simplest unity.

. . . Neither will it do for us to suffer any impatience or be hurried into any act of presumption, because the Trinity of God costs us some struggles of thought, and because we cannot find immediately how to hold it without some feeling of disturbance and distraction. Simply because God is too great for our extempore and merely childish comprehension, he ought to be given us in forms that cost us labor and put us on a stretch of endeavor. So it is with all great themes. . . . Let no shallow presumption turn us away, then, from this glorious mystery till we have given it time enough and opened to it windows enough by our praises and our prayers, to let in the revelation of its glory. Let it also be a welcome commendation to our reverence, that so

[1] Eph. i. 17–23.

many friends of God and righteous men of the past ages, such as bore a greater fight than we and grew to greater ripeness in their saintly walk, bowed themselves adoringly before this holy mystery, and sang it with hallelujahs in the worship of their temples, in their desert fastings and their fires of testimony. And as their *Gloria Patri*, the sublimest of their doxologies, is in form a hymn for the ages, framed to be continuously chanted by the long procession of times till times are lapsed in eternity, what can we better do than let the wave lift us that lifted them, and bid it roll on: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." [1]

[1] "The Christian Trinity a Practical Truth," Literary Varieties, vol. iii. Building Eras in Religion, pp. 144, 148 (originally in "New Englander," vol. xii. Nov. 1854).

CHAPTER XI

THE TRINITY: — THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST

The practical significance of the revelation of God as the Trinity has been considered. I proceed now to consider the distinctive practical significance of the revelation of God coming into humanity in Christ; the Word that was in the beginning, that was with God, that was God, became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. This significance can be set forth only in the full history of the work of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, renovating individuals to the new spiritual life of love in Christ, and developing his kingdom among men. Therefore, it is possible here only to indicate some lines of practical significance in the work of God in Christ. In ascertaining this significance we must look at it from the points of view already attained.

I. Christ the Revealer of God. — Christ in his oral teaching, and much more in his person, and in his work, sufferings, and death, is the revealer of God.

1. The self-revelation of God in the universe through the eternal Son or Word is one revelation, continuous and progressive through successive epochs, and reaches its highest plane or form in the God in Christ. The scientific theory of the evolution of the universe harmonizes with the Incarnation, and points forward to it as reasonable and probable. The theological doctrine of the Trinity is the true philosophical basis of the scientific theory of the progressive evolution of the universe. Before the creation and before all time God is eternal, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the creation God, in the Son or Logos, is expressing the archetypal thought of perfect Reason, moulding it, as

it were, into types in the forms of space and time; and continuously in the evolution of the universe he is unrolling the imprint of this eternal archetype and progressively revealing what God is. In this sense the universe itself is a copy or imprint of God's thought, and thus an ever-progressive but never-completed revelation of him.

The infinite can never be fully contained or expressed in the finite. God's revelation of himself in the universe is, therefore, necessarily progressive and at every point of time incomplete. And science discloses the fact that the universe has been evolved through successively higher stages of being. Accordingly in it God is continuously revealing his presence and power, his wisdom and love; and the revelation is progressive, reaching successively higher and higher planes. At first is the homogeneous nebulous matter, — then motion, and the inorganic universe with its mechanical and its higher chemical forces. But motion can begin only from a power transcending the motionless homogeneous matter. Here the primitive homogeneous itself is in contact with a power transcending it, acting on it and thus revealing itself in it. Then comes a time when organic vegetable life appears. But life can be produced only from previous life. Whence comes the first living germ? Here again the physical evolution directly confronts the unseen and spiritual. From this sphere of higher life, the living God, comes this higher form of being. A new power, imperceptible to sense and unmeasurable by any instrument of physical science, is brought into the universe and develops in it a new and higher order of being. Herein God's revelation of himself in the universe rises to a higher plane. Then again comes a time when an organism appears that is sensitive. Again, the physical confronts the spiritual, and from the latter comes the power that lifts the inanimate organism into sensitive life. Here is a new and higher plane of God's self-revelation in the universe. Then, after many ages of preparation, as soon as, in the progress of the evolution, a vital physical organism is developed, through which it is possible for a rational personal being to act, man appears, a being not only sensitive, but endowed with reason and free will, and susceptible of rational motives and emotions. Here not only is the universe confronted and acted on by a transcendent spiritual power, but in the universe itself appears a being in the likeness of God, a rational personal spirit, the same in kind

with God the eternal spirit. In this new creation God's self-revelation reaches a higher plane, that of rational beings, as such in the likeness of God, and therefore the highest in kind which is possible in the finite. Thus, in the evolution of the universe, so soon as any portion becomes elaborated so as to be capable of being the medium through which a higher power can be manifested, that power makes its appearance from God ever immanent in the universe, reveals itself in a new and higher order of being, and in it God makes a higher revelation of himself, of his presence, power, wisdom, and love. In man the physical evolution is transcended and becomes a moral and spiritual evolution under moral and spiritual influences; and moral law and government, discipline and education, redemption by the grace of God, begin. This is not the evolution from man of a higher order of beings that will crowd the human race out of existence; but it is the result of moral and spiritual agencies and influences which are fitted to develop men individually to the realization of the highest possibilities of their being, in immortal life, and to establish the kingdom of God on earth, to gather all the redeemed and renewed into it and to perpetuate it forever in the life immortal. And as in the physical evolution there is elaboration of material preparing it to be susceptible of receiving and manifesting a new and higher power, so it is in the spiritual process. The spiritual evolution goes on in the course of human history. God reveals himself to all men for their progressive education and development. We find also a special line of God's historical action among men leading on to the coming of God in Christ. In the Old Testament we see the Son or Word of God disciplining and educating men through many centuries in preparation for the new power of spiritual life which was to enter humanity and develop the kingdom of God into a universal and spiritual kingdom. At last in the fulness of time, when the world has become capable of receiving the Saviour, the Word becomes flesh and the God in Christ appears. Here is indeed a new creation, — not of a new order of beings, but of a human nature in which the Son of God personally and immediately reveals himself to men, and redeems them from sin. Here, indeed, something has entered into the universe that was never in it before. Here God's revelation of himself reaches its highest plane. The Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son will take of the things of Christ and show them unto

us; what men were not prepared to understand from the lips of Christ they know afterwards, as he himself promised; the study of all the ages has not yet grasped all the significance of the God in Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; the Christian experience of all the ages has not measured "the breadth and length, and height and depth, and known the love of Christ which passeth knowledge"; the revelations of the heavenly world will show nothing brighter than the glory of the Lamb that was slain, standing in the midst of the throne of God. Through this revelation we shall be forever increasing in the knowledge of God; but God's self-revelation will never reach a higher plane than this immediate revelation of himself in Christ in and through the finite spirit and nature of man. As the God in Christ, when he comes into the world, is a new reality and power acting in the universe, and a new revelation of God on its highest plane, so "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." The Spirit whom Christ sends renews sinful man to spiritual life, wherein they are put in the way of realizing the true ideal of man; thus Christ becomes the head of a new humanity, consisting of all who are born anew by the Spirit of God. And at last, in the new heaven and the new earth, he will make all things new.

It is a common error that the coming of God in Christ is an abrupt irruption into the universe, an interruption and disruption of the unity and continuity of its development. This error has occasioned much of the difficulty in believing the fact. But as from this highest plane, which we have now attained, we look back on God's action in the evolution of the universe, we see that it has been one continuous process of revelation, progressive through successive stages, till it reaches its highest plane in Christ, and is perpetuated in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the coming of God into humanity in Christ is not abnormal or unreasonable. It is the legitimate issue of the progressive revelation of God in the finite in the creation and evolution of the universe from the beginning.

2. What God in Christ reveals is primarily the personality of God, the same in its essential characteristics with the personality of man. All finite persons are alike as endowed with reason, free will, and susceptibility to the influence of rational and spiritual motives, and as being every one conscious of himself as an in-

divisible ego persisting in identity. Therefore the God in Christ reveals the likeness of God to all personal beings in the essential characteristics of personality, and thus reveals all men and angels, all personal inhabitants of all worlds, as in likeness to God and to one another in the unity of one and the same moral system.

The Scriptures represent the God in Christ, not only as the being in, through, and for whom all things were created, but also, after his ascension and glorification, as the Lord of all orders of spiritual beings in the world to come. How this is to be is not further revealed.[1] But all rational persons are in the likeness of God, and, therefore, in the likeness of one another. When God, who is the personal Spirit in the form of the absolute, reveals himself as personal Spirit in the form of the finite, the personal Spirit thus revealed is, in all his essential personal attributes, like the human personal spirit. Therefore God, as rational and personal, is eternally and essentially like all finite personal spirits. He is the original, eternal spirit, of which they are miniatures, the absolute archetype (*Urbild*) of rational personality of which every finite personal spirit is a type (*Ebenbild*). It is only in and through this likeness of God to the human spirit that any finite personal spirit can know him. To man he is thus revealed in Christ. There is, therefore, eternal in God a likeness to man, which he has revealed to men in Christ, through whom they have their highest and most complete knowledge of God. When Christ is glorified, all the accidents of humanity drop off, and only the essence of the perfect human spirit remains. Then in the glorified Christ God will be revealed in his eternal and essential likeness to man. The human is thus glorified in its likeness to the divine, and the divine revealed in its eternal and essential likeness to the human. Therefore, in the God in Christ glorified, all redeemed and glorified men will know God in his essential likeness to themselves as personal spirit, and will freely commune with him. This will be the vision of God, the face-to-face knowledge of him forever. As God immanent in the physical world is continuously revealing himself in its evolution and the interaction of its forces, so he is in Christ forever revealing the likeness of men which is eternal in himself.

Here we recur to the fact already noticed, that all personal spirits, of whatever order and in whatever world, are in the like-

[1] Col. i. 15–17; Eph. i. 10, 20–23; Phil. ii. 10.

ness of the personal God, and, therefore, in the likeness of the personal spirit of man. Hence they also, when they pass beyond their immature state of being into the heavenly life, through whatever change in them corresponds to death in man, will see the Son of God in the Christ in their own likeness; and with glad hearts they will see glorified men and spirits of every order and from every world like the God in Christ and like themselves. Then in joyful and loving fellowship they will know themselves all one in Christ. The God in Christ will be the centre of the unity and communion of all spirits in his kingdom. Thus the prophecy will be fulfilled that in his name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In no stronger phrase could language express the union of all spirits of every order and from every sphere, who are developed and perfected in the spiritual life, in the kingdom of the God in Christ. Accordingly, angels are represented as rejoicing and praising God at the birth of the Christ. Paul calls attention to the fact that he was "seen of angels"; and we are told there is "joy in heaven over one sinner who repenteth."[1]

Thus in the knowledge of Christ we are lifted above the "provincialism of this planet" and brought into fellowship with angels and archangels, with finite spirits of all orders and all worlds. God, in that eternal mode of his being called the Logos, the Word, the Son, existed and was working out the great ends of eternal wisdom and love before his advent in Christ on earth. In the mystery of his eternal being, he was uttering himself, bringing himself forth in action as the eternal personal Spirit, the eternal archetype and original of all finite rational persons. In ways unknown to us, he may have revealed himself to the rational inhabitants of other worlds in his likeness to them as personal Spirit. He may have been trusted and adored by innumerable myriads of finite persons from other worlds before he revealed himself on earth in the son of Mary. So he himself says in prayer to his Father in heaven, "The glory which I had with thee before the world was." And he describes himself as the Son of man who came down from heaven, and who, even while on earth, was in heaven.

[1] Luke ii. 13, 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Luke xv. 7.

Therefore, we may reasonably suppose that it was he who revealed himself in Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, and in various theophanies in which he appeared in local and transient manifestations in preparation for his predicted advent in the Christ. This justifies the belief that the saints of the Old Testament trusted in God the Son, or Word, who afterwards was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And being justified by faith in him as thus revealed, they could not have been kept unforgiven and unjustified in some Sheol till the death of Jesus was announced to them. This, even when applied to men who served God on earth before Christ's coming, looks too much as if God took advantage of a technicality or quibble of the law to delay the acceptance of them to his favor and the acknowledgment of them as his children. The further inference is reasonable that all the revelations which God has made to men in the universe, which he created and develops in and through the Logos or Son, whether in the constitution and order of nature, or in the constitution and providential history of man, or in the direct action of his love on human hearts, were revelations through this same Son or Word of God, who, when manifested in the forms of a finite personality, is the essential Christ, revealing that in God which is eternally and essentially human. Then, heathen, who never heard his name as Christ, may have trusted him and been accepted by him. John says of the Word that was made flesh: "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." He seems to imply that before he came into the world in Christ he was, even to those who knew him not, the true light which lighteth every man.

We know that in Christ God has revealed himself on earth in his likeness to men, and has thus united himself and, as it were, identified himself with humanity. He has not revealed how he has made known to personal beings in other worlds his likeness to them, nor how he has identified himself with them in order to bring them into union with himself, and either develop or renovate them to the true and perfect spiritual life. But it is reasonable to conclude that in dealing with personal beings in other worlds he has acted on the same principles and for the same ends as in dealing with men. In some way unknown to us he will have reached the highest plane of revelation to them analo-

gous to his revelation to man in Christ. Precisely how he has done it, it is a waste of intellect even to conjecture. But the Son or Word of God will have revealed to them their own likeness in himself and himself in their own likeness. In the heavenly state they will find glorified in him the likeness of themselves and of all spirits. And in and through him they will see God and commune with him. The peculiarities of his revelation of himself in different worlds will have dropped off as temporary, local, and incidental, and the essence of the personality, eternal in God, and alike in all, will be revealed. The likeness to finite persons in the essence of personality is eternal in God, and will be revealed forever in the Son or Word of God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." God in Christ when he ascended did not leave his humanity behind him, for he brought it with him and it is eternal in him. He glorifies it in all its essential elements in the divine. In him forever all glorified spirits from every world will see and know God and commune with him. In him they will all be one; as Christ prayed while on earth: "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Dr. Dorner suggests that this earth may be "the Bethlehem of the universe."[1] He also holds that God did not come into the world in Christ merely to redeem man from sin; but that it would be necessary, even for those who had never sinned, in order to complete God's revelation of himself and to give efficiency to his work as perfecter, disciplining and developing his rational creatures from immaturity to the perfection of their being. And he holds that no one can be justified, perfected, and admitted to the heavenly bliss unless he has known the historical Christ and intelligently accepted him. This assumes that the thirty-three years of Christ's life and action on earth, with his resurrection and ascension, as an historical transaction among men, is the central fact on which the development and perfection, or, if they have sinned, the redemption, perfection, and glorification of all persons in all worlds, and of all orders of spiritual beings depend. This substitutes the peculiarities of God's revelation of himself in humanity for the essential facts of God's likeness to his rational creatures, his love for them, and his seek-

[1] System of Christian Doctrine, Transl., vol. iii. p. 325, § 103; Person of Christ, Transl., Div. ii., vol. iii. p. 267.

ing them to bring them into unity with himself, which are revealed in Christ. It is an unwarranted attempt to picture just in what manner God would reveal himself to personal beings in other worlds, or to men if they had never sinned. It also involves most unreasonable inferences. Suppose the only gospel preached to men declared that the Son of God was incarnate in a planet of the dog-star a million of ages ago, and that no man could be accepted by God except by believing this as an historical transaction, and trusting to that Saviour. What is the skepticism of to-day compared with the skepticism which would then exist?[1] Or suppose that numberless worlds have existed inhabited by rational beings through immeasurable ages; then these countless hosts were excluded from heaven and from the vision and blessedness of God, were shut up in some Sheol, and their normal development arrested until Christ came less than two thousand years ago, and thereafter until the knowledge of the historical Christ should be communicated to them. And after his coming, the glad tidings, communicated to those living in innumerable worlds, would announce an event in a planet of whose existence they would be ignorant; it would have no connection with their history, could be known to them only through the irruption of the supernatural in a magical way, and would carry in itself the strongest conceivable objections against its truth. The hypothesis is an extravaganza and not a product of sober thought. But the principles involved in God's revelation of himself in Christ to men require us to believe that the likeness to finite spirit, the humanity as we call it, which is eternal in the essence of God as personal Spirit, is revealed in some way to all his rational creatures; that through it they have opportunity to come into union with God; that so coming they will be developed to the spiritual perfection of their being, and be gathered into the kingdom of God in oneness with all in every world and every order of spirits who live the life of faith and love and have come into like fellowship with God; and that when glorified in the heavenly state they will see God with spiritual vision, the God

[1] J. Norman Lockyer says that the probability is that the number of stars visible through a telescope of moderate dimensions is between thirty and fifty millions; that light, moving 186,000 miles in a second, would be about three-and-a-half years coming to the earth from the nearest stars, and 3,500 years in coming from visible stars of the twelfth magnitude (Nineteenth Century, Nov. 1889, p. 786).

in Christ in his glorified humanity, which will be equally the glorified nature of all finite spirits, and in union with all the blest will commune with him as their common Head and king. And with them men will see in the glorified Christ God in his human side and man in his divine side.

As to the conjecture that God would have come into humanity in Christ if man had never sinned,[1] it is not to be doubted that in some way the Son of God would have accomplished for man all which is accomplished in Christ. But we cannot affirm that he would have done it in the same way; and it is idle to waste time in conjecturing what God would have done if the course of human history had been so fundamentally different from what it has been. It may be, if man had not sinned, he would not have been subject to death, but would have attained the spiritual body by some change analogous to an epoch in the growth of a plant, such as its blooming into blossoms. And this accords with the doctrine of the church that death came upon man by sin. Then, if man had not sinned, at least Christ could not have died. It is enough to know that the coming of God in Christ into humanity was no isolated or accidental action; that it was the legitimate outcome of his continuous and progressive revelation of himself by his action in the universe; and that if man had never sinned the revelation of God in humanity and the consummation of the union of God with man, and all the glorious results following, would have been effected in some way equally worthy of God and equally essential for the realizing of the highest ideal of man.

This answers the objection that the theological doctrine of the atonement implies that the atonement was made by sinners rejecting and crucifying the Christ. We now see that the revelation of God in Christ was an epoch in the continuous revelation of God by his historical action progressively realizing the archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being so far as possible in a finite universe, and in a moral system of finite rational free agents, and in the exercise of good-will in righteousness; that is, in exact accordance with the principles and laws of the eternal Reason. If man had never sinned, God, in the realization of his archetypal ideal, would have revealed himself in humanity as effectively as he has revealed himself in Christ. When men have sinned, God

[1] This is controverted by Calvin in opposition to Osiander; "Inst.," Lib. ii. cap. xii. 2–7.

does not cease to act in the progressive realization of his archetypal ideal and the revelation of his love, but in the fulness of his love comes into humanity in Christ to rescue men from sin and bring them back into harmony with himself in obedience to the eternal law of love. Here his action in realizing his ideal takes on the distinctive atoning significance, in the facts that it is designed to bring sinners back into conformity with the law; and in doing this he reveals himself in Christ acting, under human limitations and conditions, in good-will regulated in righteousness, in obedience to the supreme and immutable law even unto the death on the cross. Thus he maintains and vindicates the law in the redemption and forgiveness of sinners. Therefore it is not the sinners, rejecting and crucifying the Christ, who make the atonement. On the contrary, they do all in their power to hinder God's redemptive action and to frustrate his gracious influences. Therefore the atoning significance of the work of Christ is only a peculiar application of principles in accordance with which God always acts, of the character which God reveals in all his action, and of the authority of the principles and laws of eternal Reason, in accordance with which God has constituted and is evolving the universe, both in its physical and its moral systems.

God in Christ, revealing the fact that the likeness of man is eternal in God, demonstrates that the true knowledge of God must be in important respects anthropomorphic. All science rests on the postulate that the universe is constituted in accordance with the principles and laws of reason, the same in kind with the reason of man. Physical science is simply the exposition of this fact. Every discovery which marks its progress is a discovery of a new instance of this accordance of the constitution of the universe with the reason of man. The progress of physical science is a continuous demonstration that reason in the creator and orderer of the universe is the same in kind with the reason of man. And man finds in his own constitution witness to the law of love which God reveals as the universal moral law. The science both of nature and of man is a continuous demonstration of the likeness of man as a rational and moral being to the God who created and constituted the universe. In Christ God comes into humanity and reveals himself in the likeness of man, and man in the likeness of God. Therefore, any true idea of God is necessarily anthropomorphic as to the essential attributes and elements

of a personal spirit. God's likeness to man in these attributes and elements is a fundamental reality of the universe underlying all physical science and all knowledge of the moral obligations of man and of the moral constitution and ordering of society. This likeness of God to man in the essentials of the personal spirit accounts for the tendency of uncultivated people to ascribe to God the form and members of the human body and other non-essential accompaniments and conditions of personality. It also accounts for and justifies the rhetorical and poetical anthropomorphism of the same kind. But these need not mislead, for they are easily distinguished from the true anthropomorphism of philosophy and of the highest revelation of God.

The relation of the God in Christ to all orders of spirits in all worlds, throws light on another fundamental fact already noticed. The spiritual underlies the physical as the deeper reality, and is co-extensive with it. Even here in the organic life of the mortal body, all our science consists in reading the spiritual imprinted in the physical, and in knowing ourselves and our fellow-men in our rational and spiritual personality, and in our relations to God and to one another in the moral and spiritual system. Even here God presents himself in our consciousness, and touches us with spiritual and divine influences, and we are made aware of him as the God in whom we live and move and have our being. As Jesus when on earth tenderly touched the sick whom he healed, not excepting the unclean lepers, so now by his unseen Spirit he touches sinful souls with his saving grace, and they feel his presence and arise to newness of life. Thus even here we discover that the universe is the temple of God, and the physical in it is the veil which hides while it reveals the Holy of holies in which are the mercy-seat of God and the ark of his covenant with men. At death the veil of sense drops off, and with open spiritual vision man sees his spiritual environment. He is conscious of God present and revealed in all the graciousness of his likeness to men and his love for them. He feels God's presence and his gracious touch in closer contact and more vivid perception than when rapt in his loftiest experience on earth. His consciousness of the present God will be analogous to his consciousness on earth of the outward world of sense; it will be the vision of God, the knowledge of him face to face. But the God in Christ, thus presented to the open spiritual vision of the

human spirit, cannot be limited to a single place. The apocalyptic vision of the glorified saints around the throne of Christ in heaven reveals the great truth that God, in the likeness of men and in the fulness of his love for them, will be immediately present to their spiritual consciousness as if in open vision, and will bring them into spiritual union and communion with himself, and into participation in his work and his blessedness. But the form of the vision is an incidental peculiarity, not the essential reality which the vision reveals. In the light of modern science we assume that rational beings may have existed and been either redeemed from sin or educated in their state of immaturity without sin, in innumerable worlds and through immeasurable ages. These cannot all be gathered around a person sitting on a throne at one definite point of space. Jesus, as he drew near to death, says to the Father in prayer, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii. 4, 5). Since the revelation of the Son of God in Christ, acting through a human nature and under human limitations and conditions, was completed, he lives in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, revealing humanity itself glorified in him in God's likeness to man and his redeeming love for him. Thus the glorified Christ is not limited in space nor confined to any one spot; for the glorified Christ is the eternal Son of God. Wherever the glorified spirit of any finite rational person may be, he will see the glorified Christ, the Son of God, revealing the person's own likeness to God, and God's likeness to him and his love for him; revealing the human side of God and his affinity for all his rational creatures. And with spiritual vision every glorified spirit will see the glorified Christ revealing himself to him, as was foreshadowed in ancient times, when "Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. xxxiii. 11). And so Paul represents it, "Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I have been known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Wherever and whenever the veil of sense drops off, there bursts on the spirit the vision of the all-environing God in the likeness of the finite spirit, and effulgent with divine and Christlike love. The same divine humanity which in Jesus was revealed to the eye of sense, the

same gracious one who in the unseen Spirit of holiness has touched and healed our souls on earth, will be immediately seen through the eye of the glorified spirit of man, with clearer vision, with deeper insight, with larger comprehension, and with closer intimacy, stronger love and ecstatic joy.

Here it is asked, if Christ was God, how could God be acting elsewhere while he was in Christ, and when he was dying on the cross. The question implies that God is limited in space, that when he is acting in one place he cannot be acting in another. It would be as pertinent to ask, If God is immanently active in the sun or in a growing lily, how can he be acting anywhere else?

When the Son of God became man, he did not cease to be God nor to exercise the power of God in sustaining and administering the universe. Some Christian thinkers have pushed their conception of the humiliation to the extreme of supposing it to involve this cessation. Thus the Rev. Dr. F. D. Huntington says: "At last, when all the purposes of the propitiation are accomplished, this incarnate Head over all things to the church will render up the kingdom to the Father, and resume his place in the co-equal Three, the indivisible One."[1] But this conception involves insuperable difficulties. It supposes that the Son vacated his place in the Godhead and resumed it again either at his ascension or at the end of the earthly history of man when the work of redemption is completed. But this is impossible. God is indivisible, not composed of parts. No part of him can be removed for a season. No one of his essential attributes, powers, or modes of being, can for a moment be vacated. It is also incompatible with the teaching of Christ and the New Testament. Christ declares his presence and action in heaven while in his humiliation on earth: "He who descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." He claims omnipresence even while on earth: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"; and before his ascension he gives his promise for all time: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] Accordingly Augustine teaches that the Son did not lay aside the form of God either in the sense of divesting himself of his divinity, or in the sense of a total non-use of it during the humiliation.

[1] Christian Believing and Living, p. 367.

[2] John iii. 13; Matth. xviii. 20, and xxviii. 20.

The Son of God takes humanity in Jesus as the medium of his revelation of himself on its highest plane. He reveals himself acting in the forms of humanity and under its conditions and limitations. Yet in his divine essence he transcends these limitations and conditions and this medium of revelation.

Thus we have further insight into the fact that the coming of God into humanity in Christ, as the highest plane of his continuous and progressive revelation of himself, is not anything extraneous, accidental, or abnormal. It reveals in the rational and free personality of God an essential and eternal likeness or prototype of the personality of man and of all finite, rational, and personal beings. It is included in the divine and eternal archetype of the creation. In its essential elements and significance it is necessary to the perfecting of finite personal beings of all orders and in all worlds, and to the gathering of them, in unity with God and with one another, into the kingdom of God, which is the end for which the universe exists and the progressive realization of which is the revelation of God and the declaration of his glory. The likeness of God to man revealed in Christ is a real likeness eternal in God. Otherwise God could not have revealed it in revealing himself. It is this which those who are redeemed by God in Christ and glorified, will see in the glorified Christ. This divine in the human and human in the divine will be as real to them and as clearly seen as it was seen in Christ when he was on earth; and as much more so as man's spiritual knowledge and life in glory will be greater than the same in its inferior development in the earthly life.

3. The God in Christ reveals, not only the personality, but also the character of God. The pre-eminent revelation of himself which God makes in Christ is the revelation that God is love.

In Christ, he gives us assured certainty that God is love. In nature and in man is evidence justifying the belief that the universe is constituted and progressively developed in accordance with the law and for the realization of the ends of wisdom and love. But we are perplexed and distressed by finding in it sin, suffering, and death. Now further debate and argument are needless. In Christ, God himself has come into the world to seek and to save the lost. We see him entering into humanity, sharing in the lot of men, meeting the temptations and assaults of the

powers of evil, enduring suffering and crucifixion to save men from sin, opening to them the way of return to God, and bringing upon them the influences and agencies of divine wisdom and love, to draw them away from sin to put their trust in him and thus to attain their highest perfection and blessedness. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

In Christ, God reveals his love to man as a self-renouncing or self-sacrificing love. The spirit of self-renunciation or self-sacrifice is of the essence of the love required in the law of God. At first sight it is not obvious how this can be a characteristic of God's love. We see indeed, on further reflection, that God's love is essentially self-renouncing, because his action is always a giving, a forth-putting. In creating and continuously upholding and evolving the universe, he is the Absolute putting forth of his fulness in the finite, the Highest coming down to the lowest to lift it up. He receives nothing in supply of wants. He opens his hand and all creatures are filled with good. But in Christ, at once divine and human, God reveals the fact that his eternal love, exercised under human limitations and conditions, is self-sacrificing, to the utmost degree of possible human self-sacrifice, in saving men from sin, and therein realizes the highest manifestation of itself as the love that is eternal and unchanging in the God. For we must bear in mind that it is the Son of God who is acting under human limitations and conditions in Christ revealing the very heart of God, in his kindly intercourse with men, taking their little children in his arms and blessing them, weeping with them in their sorrows, ever ready to help them in distress, indignant at wrong-doers, bearing their sins as in the anguish of Gethsemane, — as a mother bears the sins of a wayward son, seeking to save him from his sin, in the anguish at once of disapprobation and compassion, — suffering the assaults of the wicked even unto death. God in Christ reveals also the fundamental fact that in self-renouncing love man realizes the divine in his humanity, and attains his own highest perfection and well-being in the likeness of the ever blessed God and in union with him. "He who findeth his life shall lose it; and he who loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matth. x. 39).

In Christ, God reveals his love as entirely disinterested and self-moved. He is not dependent on men for his perfection or his

blessedness. He seeks them before they seek him. Man is not required to do anything to kindle lovingkindness in the heart of God. If lovingkindness and mercifulness are not eternal in God, nothing which man can do could create them there. He might as well suppose that it depends on him to kindle sunbeams in the sun. God's love in its overflowing fulness pours forth like the sunshine, illuminating and quickening the universe and therein revealing God. It is for man to trust God thus revealed, to receive of the fulness of his love and be illuminated and quickened by it in the knowledge, love, and service of God. God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly; while we were yet sinners, while we were enemies, Christ died for us and we were reconciled to God.[1]

In Christ, God reveals his love, not as a mere sentiment, but as an energizing and serving love. Every man is the object of God's redeeming love. He tasted death for every man; here is the singular number with the distributive pronoun. To every human being come the influences and agencies of redemption through Christ. From him the Spirit of God is poured out on all flesh, drawing men everywhere to be reconciled to God, knocking at the door of every heart, calling to every one to open the door that he may come in to purify and bless. And every one may have all the riches of God's grace without impoverishing any other. This is characteristic of God's giving; as each person may have the full power of the sun without taking away from any other; as every flower and every blade of grass is served and developed in its growth by all the cosmic energies of the universe, concentring on it as if it were the only one.

In Christ, God's love is revealed as universal good-will regulated by righteousness. Righteousness is not in antagonism to love nor even in antithesis to it; it is included in love. Love is benevolence regulated by righteousness. A disposition to promote happiness unregulated by righteousness defeats itself and does evil instead of good. In Christ, God reveals his benevolence regulated by righteousness. The object for which he came was to save men from their sin, to bring them back to a perfect conformity with the law of love, even to that complete conformity with it in its utmost strictness which he himself showed in his

[1] Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

own obedience to it even to the death on the cross. This is the great light which dawned on the world in the coming of Christ, the universal love of God. This is the predicted sun of righteousness rising with healing in his beams; righteousness and goodwill combined in love, like light and heat in the sunshine.

> Immortal love, forever full,
> Forever flowing free,
> Forever shared, forever whole,
> A never-ebbing sea.
> Blow winds of God, awake and blow
> The mists of earth away;
> Shine out, O light divine, and show
> How wide and far we stray. — WHITTIER.

The record of this love of God in Christ is itself proof of the historical truth of the record. Man out of his selfish heart could not invent so grand a conception. Wondrous as it is that God should thus in Christ reveal his love to his creatures, and whatever difficulties the Incarnation presents to the understanding, it is easier to believe that God has so revealed his love to the world than to believe that this grand conception has been created out of nothing by the imagination of man. If it was so created, how insignificant in comparison with it are all the greatest creations of human genius.

4. God in Christ reveals the law of self-renouncing love as the supreme, universal, and inviolable law of the universe. He declared the law, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." But God in Christ, who proclaims this law, himself obeys it. In his humiliation, in his sinless obedience on earth, in his suffering and death, he obeys this law, and is the perfect exemplar of the self-sacrificing love which it requires. God in Christ also makes the fullest proclamation of the law. In the sermon on the mount, and in all his teaching from his human lips of tenderness and love, he proclaims it, as it was never proclaimed before, in its breadth, its spirituality, its heart-searching requirements, its inflexible severity, and its inviolable authority. All his life long in fidelity to it he confronted the powers of wickedness, resisted them in the burning brightness of his love, and meekly bore the suffering they inflicted. But most of all on the cross he asserted and maintained the universal and inviolable authority of the law and sealed his

witness to it with his blood. Here he proclaims it, in grandeur and majesty more awful than all the thunders of Sinai, as the fundamental law of the universe; the law by which the destiny of every rational being must be decided; the law of God with its inexorable award of the blessing and the curse; the law of love, in disobedience to which no rational being, anywhere in the universe or at any time in all the ages of its existence, can live a life of selfishness and attain any real good, or in obedience to it live a life of love and miss the highest and true good. It is the proclamation, as the universal law, of the great secret which Jesus had disclosed in his teaching, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."[1] In Jesus Christ and him crucified, God reveals that a sinner can be forgiven and restored to the divine favor only by such action of God as fully asserts and maintains the universal and inviolable authority and obligation of the law of love, and on condition of the sinner's returning to God in loving trust, and thus turning from the life of sin to obedience to God in the life of love.

In this assertion, maintenance, and vindication of God's law is the atoning significance of Christ's humiliation, obedience, suffering, and death. Those who do not recognize this atoning significance and deprecate its implied relation to law and justice, and sometimes deprecate the idea of law itself as antagonistic to God's love and obscuring its manifestation, forget that the law, whose universal and inviolable authority is asserted and vindicated by God in Christ, is itself the law of self-renouncing love, and the righteousness, which God reveals and satisfies in Christ in order to the justification of the sinner, is itself an essential element in the love required by the law. God maintains and vindicates the law by the punishment of transgressors. He has so constituted and is evolving the universe that every one, who lives in selfishness and so in violation of the law, deprives himself of perfection and well-being. This is God's vindication of the law by the punishment of persisting sinners. But the punishment of sinners is not the only way in which God maintains and vindicates the law. He does it also by his loving influences in righteousness to draw sinners away from sin to obedience to the law in love, by his own obedience to the law to its utmost requirement in all that he does in Christ to redeem sinners from sin and to reconcile

[1] Matth. x. 39.

them to himself, and by the fact that in all his action in redemption his object is not to save men *from* the law but *to* it, in obedient recognition of its authority and the exercise of the love which it requires. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth" (Rom. x. 4). All God's action in creation, providential and moral government, and redemption is in good-will regulated in its exercise by righteousness in exact accord with all principles, laws, ideals, and ends of eternal Reason. As such, in it all he maintains and vindicates the law. So all his action in its relation to the acceptance and forgiveness of sinners, who return to him in penitential and loving trust and service, has atoning significance. His prime demand is not for the punishment of sinners, but for their obedience in the love which the law requires. When, under his loving agency and influence, the sinner returns to God and begins the life of love and is accepted as a child of God and forgiven, not only God's action in Christ in redemption, but his entire action in good-will regulated by righteousness, is his vindication and maintenance of the authority of the law. If in resistance of all God's gracious influences the sinner persists in sin, the universe itself, expressing in its constitution and evolution the thought of God, vindicates the law by making well-being impossible for the sinner persisting in selfishness and in opposition to God. There is more than poetry suggested in God's appeal through his prophets, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. . . . Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth" (Isa. i. 2; Micah vi. 2).

To correct a common misapprehension, an explanation is necessary. The doctrine that God in Christ asserts, maintains, and vindicates the law, does not mean that his action in so doing is something put on for effect to make men respect the law. It means that God's action in so doing is the spontaneous expression of his essential character as God; he simply acts out what he is as God. Thus he reveals to men what he essentially and immutably is, and so asserts, maintains, and vindicates the law before all men. This he does in all his action constituting and evolving the universe, physical and moral, in exact accordance with the principles and laws of eternal Reason and in the pro-

gressive realization of its ideals; in the punishment of persistent sinners and the blessedness of the righteous, expressing his good-will, regulated in exact righteousness, through the very constitution and evolution of the universe; pre-eminently in Christ under human limitations and conditions in exact obedience to the law of love even unto death in redeeming sinners from sin and condemnation; and in his offer of acceptance and forgiveness only on condition that the sinner himself yield to the drawing of God's love and return to God in penitential and loving trust and service and so into conformity with the law. In all that God does in the redemption of sinners, as in all his action in the finite universe, he acts forth spontaneously his essential and immutable character, and so reveals himself to men; thus he asserts, maintains, and vindicates the supreme and universal authority of the eternal law of love. In this assertion, maintenance, and vindication of God's law in his redemption of men from sin is the atoning significance of Christ's humiliation, obedience, suffering, and death.

Here we find further evidence of the unity and continuity of God's revelation of himself, in the fact that God in Christ reveals the law in accordance with which he has always acted in his revelation of himself in the universe. His whole action has accorded with the one great spiritual law revealed, asserted, and maintained in Christ. In the God in Christ the highest descends to the lowest to lift it up. And this has been the law according to which God has, as a matter of fact, always been acting in the universe. From his ineffable grandeur as the Absolute Being he goes down to the finite to create worlds for intelligent beings to live in; he is immanent in the universe, energizing to elaborate its material into higher form, and whenever it becomes susceptible of receiving and manifesting a higher power, he is always there, waiting, as it were, and ready to cause the higher power to appear. After rational persons have been brought into being, in the spiritual system he is always present with spiritual influences, waiting to impart blessing. When the world is prepared for his coming the Saviour long foretold comes and God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. After Christ is glorified, God in the Holy Spirit is still in the world with his all-pervading influences, to raise men from their ignorance and immaturity and even from their sinfulness, and to develop them to the highest spiritual life, waiting to enter every willing heart, to renew to the

life of love every one who is willing to receive his grace, — as he was in the physical world bringing in a higher order of being whenever the material was prepared to be the medium of its manifestation. Thus the prophecy is ever in fulfilment: "Therefore will Jehovah wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you" (Isaiah xxx. 18). Thus the Word becoming flesh, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, reveals the most fundamental law of the universe, that the higher should go down to the lower to lift it up; or, as our Lord worded it, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." This fundamental law of the universe is the law of love. The universe reveals the inexhaustible love of God. The lower his love descends the more it discloses its god-like character. In every grade of being in the universe, even to the lowest, God is immanent, energizing to lift it higher. Therefore, when the Lord of glory came into humanity, "he took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7). And this is the highest expression of his infinite love, progressively and continuously realizing in the finite the archetype of his perfect wisdom, always the highest going down to the lowest to lift it up. God coming down into humanity is revealed in the form of a servant. By the serving of God and man in self-renouncing love the divine in man is revealed and he is lifted to the moral likeness of God and to a participation in his blessedness.

5. God in Christ reveals the end for which he works in the universe and rests not through all the ages. He came to seek and to save the lost, to reconcile the world unto himself, to quicken men to newness of life, and thus to bring forth a new and spiritual humanity and to establish the kingdom of God on earth. In that kingdom as it goes on forever is the realization for man of all that is true, right, perfect, and good, — of all the highest possibilities of his being. As we look back on the successive epochs of God's action in the universe we see that in fact they have all been preparatory to this result and necessary to its realization. From epoch to epoch the material world has been prepared to be the home of rational beings and furnished as a school with the apparatus for their education, discipline, and development. Then, when the world has become ready for him, so that he can exist in it, rational man appears. Then the

process of education, discipline and development under moral government goes on till in the fulness of time Christ comes and the kingdom of God appears in its predicted Messianic form, and then is progressively developed under the divine Spirit. The establishment, extension and perpetuation of this kingdom is revealed by the God in Christ as the end to be accomplished in the creation and development of the earth and man. And this is the end for the realization of which the action of God in the universe from the beginning, so far as this earth is concerned, has, as a matter of fact, been directed. The whole is one process from epoch to epoch preparing for the coming of Christ and of his kingdom and realizing its progressive development. We are justified in inferring that the development of the same kingdom of God in its more comprehensive meaning has been the grand design of God in the creation and evolution of every world and in the historical education and development of its rational inhabitants; whatever may have been the particular method and details of his action revealing himself among them in their historical development. The language of the Talmud is not too strong: "The world was created only for the Messiah."[1] And Paul says of the Son of God revealed in Christ, "All things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things and in him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17).

6. In this revelation the God in Christ is at once the revealer and the revealed. It is remarkable that in his earthly life Christ made himself the subject of his own preaching. He proclaimed himself the founder and king of the kingdom of God. Therein God reveals himself in him. For the kingdom of God is the great end for which the world was made; in its progressive development God is making the revelation of his glory; and in it he is to realize the highest results of his infinite wisdom and love. The founder and king of God's kingdom must be God. Since it is God who reveals himself in Christ, Christ is the exponent to us under human limitations and conditions of what God is. What Christ says and feels and does is just what God would say and feel and do, if acting in the form of humanity and under human limitations and conditions. When he expounded the law it was God's exposition of the law uttered by human lips. When Christ exposed and rebuked wickedness, when he in

[1] Edersheim, "Life of Jesus," vol. i. pp. 162, 163.

love stood in opposition to all the powers of evil, when he gave up his life in maintaining the sanctity of the law, redeeming men from sin and Satan, establishing his kingdom and declaring its character as a kingdom of righteousness and of the spiritual life by faith in God, in opposition to the ambitious designs of the rulers of the Jews, it was God in humanity, antagonizing in sacrificial love all the powers of wickedness and overcoming evil with good. When Christ wept over Jerusalem he revealed the heart of God, — not revoking the doom of the trangressors, brought on themselves by their persistent rejection of their covenant-God, but weeping as he declared the inevitable ruin, and yearning over them in sorrow because they had resisted all his efforts to bring them back to the life of faith in God and love to God and man. It is God who is revealed in Christ. And this is what man needs. The glad tidings is not that a remarkable and unique man, named Jesus, lived a holy life, realized the ideal man, and died a martyr in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago. That in itself alone would be a concrete revelation in an actual life of the holy law of love, which would condemn all other men as coming short of it in sin. But it avails little for us that one man in ancient times showed in his character all the rich and beautiful humanities which can adorn a human life, all that can be worthy and admirable in a man. What we need to know is that these beautiful humanities have their archetypes in God ; that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; that he has come to us in the beauty and glory of the divine love drawing us to him to make us beautiful and glorious in his likeness. And this is the glad tidings of great joy, that all in Christ which is pure and strong in righteousness, which is tender and sympathizing in compassion, which is beautiful, attractive and winning in love, is the revelation of God himself as he comes to seek and save the lost.

II. God in Christ the Reconciler of Man unto God. — God reveals himself in Christ. He makes this revelation in his action in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

1. God in Christ is the redeemer of men from sin and condemnation, the reconciler of men to God. Redemption is the action of God. It is all which God does to deliver man from sin. The reconciliation of man to God is the result which redemption is designed to effect.

Sin in its essence is the apostasy and alienation of man by his own free act from God. As such it introduces contradiction into the life and development of the man. He renounces his condition as a creature of God always dependent on him, and sets himself up in self-sufficiency. He takes up into his inmost being this contradiction, that a finite and dependent creature is sufficient for himself in independence of God. His whole life becomes a ceaseless and unavailing struggle to realize this contradiction and absurdity. Thus he is always in conflict with himself, with his fellow-men, with reason, with the constitution of the universe and with God. Necessarily, therefore, in seeking his life he loses it. His life becomes a perpetual disappointment, a torment of never-ending and always fruitless struggle, a dissatisfaction driving to despair, a life wasted and thrown away. He is a lost man. And, continuing in his self-sufficiency and self-seeking, there is for him no escape or deliverance. As our Saviour declares, though he gain the whole world, he loses himself and is cast away (Luke ix. 25). In redeeming men from sin God in Christ is the Reconciler. He effects the reconciliation of man to God. In accomplishing this he removes the contradiction and conflict from the man's being; he brings him into harmony with himself, with his fellow-men, with reason, with the constitution and law of the universe, and with God.

It is the thought of some that the practical significance of Christ's person is found in the fact that he is the ideal man, perfect in moral and spiritual character, and in all the attributes of man in his earthly life. But such an ideal man of himself alone could bring no help or hope to other men, bitterly aware in the light of reason and conscience that in sin they have already missed the ideal and failed to realize the end of their being. Though this ideal man himself should stand steadfast unto death under the assaults of the powers of evil and rise triumphant to the heavenly glory, yet he would not break a way to be forever open for sinful men to follow him to God and eternal bliss, nor bring the love of God and the divine influences and energies of redemption to rescue them from the powers of evil, to quicken them to new spiritual life, and to restore them to God's favor and reunite them to him. But God in Christ is himself with divine energy using the resources of his wisdom and love in redeeming men from sin. He in humanity and for us men makes atone-

ment for the sins of men; opens a way for sinners to return to God; insures forgiveness and acceptance as children of God to all who will come to him in penitent and loving trust; he is victorious over sin and death; he rises and reigns in heaven, all power given unto him in heaven and on earth; he prepares in his Father's house the many mansions for his redeemed; he sends from the Father the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them unto men, to convince them of sin and to renew them to the spiritual life. The Redeemer of men is not a man alone, however perfect; he is not God alone, however otherwise revealed to the intelligence. He is the God in Christ, the highest ideal of the human, the lowest condescension of the divine. He is the redeemer of men from sin and the reconciler of men to God.

2. God in Christ is the mediator between God and man. Because he is redeemer he must be the mediator. He is mediator in the sphere of knowledge. As we have already seen, it is through him that God makes his highest revelation of himself, and through him that man attains his highest knowledge of God. He is the mediator through whom we come to God in worship, communion and service. In him God comes to man; in him man comes to God. It is the meeting-place of the human and the divine. God is above man by the whole distance from the infinite to the finite, and from the holy to the sinful. But in Christ, God reaches down from the height of his glory to man, and man from his finiteness and sin reaches up to the divine; in him the divine and the human are connected and brought into free communication, the circuit is completed; through him the electric and quickening power of God's love comes down upon men quickening their faith and love; and the faith and love of men reach up to God and return to men in blessing.

Here it should be noted that Christ as Mediator is not a third person between God and man. He is God himself coming into humanity and disclosing his likeness to men and his interest in them; bringing on them gracious divine influences to quicken them to the new life of universal love, and to draw them to himself in penitential and loving trust, and so to bring them into communion and union with himself, and to transform them into his own moral likeness. Thus in Christ God comes to men, and in him men have access to God. In fleeing to Christ, the sinner

flees to God in him. As the old divines used to say to sinners, in the consciousness of sin and fearing the wrath of God, "If you would flee from God, flee to God."

3. It follows that God in Christ is to man the object of the faith through which he is justified, and the object and inspiration of his love and service. Hence our Lord presents as the distinctive motive to Christian enterprise and self-denial in the service of love: "Do this for my sake"; and in instituting the Lord's Supper as a sacrament to be always observed in his church, he says: "This do in remembrance of me."

III. God in Christ the Revealer of Man. — In him is the fullest revelation of what man is, and of what are the highest possibilities of his being.

1. The God in Christ reveals the dignity and worth of every human being in his individual personality, and thus reveals the highest possibilities of his being.

He reveals the spiritual in man, and therein his superiority to sense. He reveals man as a personal spirit in the moral and spiritual system under the government of God, and the object of his redeeming grace. It is often asked why Christ did not reveal to men the inventions of industrial art, and thus give them at once all the advantages of modern civilization. An obvious answer is that, if he had done so, he would have taught that the highest interest of man is in the things of sense, that the knowledge of wealth-producing agencies is the highest revelation God could make to man, worthy to have the Son of God come into humanity to communicate it. On the contrary, Christ came to reveal to man his spiritual powers and interests, his relation to God, his membership in the moral and spiritual system, his alienation from God, and the redeeming and reconciling grace of God opening the way for man to return to union with God, and seeking to draw him from sin back to himself to union with God in the life of love and to the privileges of the children of God. A further answer, bearing, however, only indirectly on our present line of thought, is that it is essential to man's development, education, and progress, that, by the energies of his own intellect and will, he discover what the physical system is, and win the mastery of its resources and powers.

In Christ, God discloses also his own estimate of the greatness

and worth of man. He esteems him of so great worth that he seeks him even in the debasement of sin to reclaim him to himself; he comes into humanity in Christ making atonement for sinners; in the Holy Spirit he approaches men with heavenly influences and dwells in every heart, opened to admit him, with life-giving and purifying power. An apostle says: "Ye are bought with a price." God reveals his estimate of the value of a man in the price he pays for his redemption. As another apostle says: "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with precious blood, even the blood of Christ."

Christ reveals man's greatness and worth as a personal spirit in the form of the finite, in the likeness of God the eternal Spirit. It has been shown already that Christ reveals in God the essential elements of personality like that of man. He equally reveals in man personality like that of God. If God is like man, man is like God. If God is human, man is divine. And he comes into humanity to redeem man from his sinfulness and alienation from God, and so to enable him to become like God also in moral character and the spiritual life of love and to attain his normal condition of union with God. As Athanasius says: "The Logos became human that we might become divine."[1]

Christ reveals the greatness of a man in the fact that through him every one may be admitted to intimacy of communion with God and may be a worker together with God in the advancement of the designs of his eternal and universal love. And this is the privilege of every one without the intervention of any priest or mediator except the God in Christ alone. Christianity is intensely individualizing. It emphasizes the worth of every person in himself. Christ tasted death for every man. Every one has equal privilege of access to God through him. The promise of justification is to every sinner on the sole condition of his personal faith in Christ. Every person of every condition and in every place may enter into his closet and shut the door and there in the immediate presence of God and alone with him pour out his inmost soul before him and receive his grace.

Christ reveals also the immortality of man and thus discloses his greatness in the life eternal above all that is mortal and transitory.

[1] Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνηνθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν. "Oration on the Incarnation," c. 54, Works, vol. i. p. 192; Patrologia Graeca, vol. xxv.

2. Christ revealed the highest possibilities of man collectively in the kingdom of God and the gradual transformation of human society into it. In revealing the greatness, dignity, and worth of man, Christ revealed the sacredness of his rights inherent and inalienable in his personality, the equality of men in their equal rights and privileges before God in Christ, and the brotherhood of men, not by race or blood, but by their common relation to God their common Father in heaven and their common redeemer through Christ, who "is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). These great ideas, which have been so powerful in modern political and social progress as well as in the development of the individual man, have all entered into human history as effective factors in the progress of civilization from the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Christ reveals the ideal of the constitution of society. This is contrary to a common practical error that Christianity is designed only to save some individuals from hell and to get them safe into heaven, and that the renovation of society, the betterment of political and social institutions, laws, and usages are entirely beneath its scope. But Christ proposes to realize this renovation and betterment in the kingdom of God, into which through the influences and agencies of redemption human society on earth is to be transformed, and which is to be perpetuated under new conditions in heaven. In this the true good of man is to be attained and the ideal of humanity organized in its collective life is to be realized. Christ is declared to be the Head of a new humanity, the second Adam. The renovation of man is not effected merely by man, of his own free will reforming his conduct and developing a new character. Man as a created being and dependent on God cannot attain a right character in self-sufficiency, independent of God. All right character in finite persons must begin and continuously go on in faith in God. In redemption the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, brings the love of the Father which was revealed in the Son upon the hearts of men, and, under the gracious offers and influences of redemption, quickens men to love like Christ's; and with his abiding and indwelling influence permeates the life of the man and transfigures him into the likeness of Christ. Thus begins and goes on the life of

God in the soul of man. The man thus born of God develops into his father's likeness. The eternally human in God, of which man in his constitution as personal is the likeness, now through the indwelling spirit is revealed in the man, growing in him, in the forms of human finiteness, into the complete moral likeness of God, the likeness of his love in Christ. All thus renovated to the life of faith and love and united as the spiritual children of God through Christ their common Saviour, constitute the kingdom of God. For the complete or divine humanity is not fully revealed in the individual, except in the Christ; but in mankind collectively as regenerated through the Spirit and nurtured under divine influence, and progressively developed in the kingdom of God. In this sense Christ is the Head or source of the new renovated spiritual humanity, as Adam was of the race in its organic unity.

Christianity is the religion of promise, hope, and progress. It must be so because it is in its essence the glad tidings of God in Christ redeeming men from sin and reconciling them to himself, and of his continued gracious agency in the Holy Spirit. This promise came down with increasing clearness and fulness from the beginning of human sin in Eden through the whole history of God's kingdom in the Old Testament till it reached its fulfilment in the coming of the Christ; and since his coming it has opened out into a wider reach of promise for all peoples and for all time. Thus, with the expectation that the future will always be better than the past, Christians in every age and nation, through faith in the God in Christ, are strong in courage and hope to work and pray for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. They attempt great things because they expect great things. Christ said that whosoever in Christian love should give a cup of cold water only, should not lose his reward. Accordingly, every one who in Christ's spirit and in his name is working and praying for the relief of human misery and the supply of human needs of whatever kind, for the reformation of abuses and the suppression of wrong-doing, for the removal of ignorance, for the promotion of the well-being of any person, the least or the lowest, is working and praying for the advancement of the kingdom of God, — for that comprehends the realization of all which is true, and all which is right, and all which is beautiful and perfect, of all well-being of man, and of all which is implied

in his normal relations toward God. And because God in Christ has come into humanity and his Spirit is "poured out on all flesh," it is no Utopian dream to expect that at last human society will be transformed into the Kingdom of Christ, and that love like Christ's will rule in all hearts and lives and find expression in all the institutions, laws, and usages of society.

3. Christ is the revealer of man to himself as a sinner. It is only in the knowledge of God in Christ that man attains a full knowledge of his own sinfulness and ill-desert, and takes the gauge and dimensions of the evil and guilt of sin. His sin is measured by the whole distance from the ideal of humanity in Christ to the actual character of the sinful man. In Christ, revealing man's privilege of union and communion with God as his normal condition, is also the revelation of the man's wilful alienation from God and his renunciation of him as the supreme object of trust and service, and his setting up for himself in self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-seeking. The brighter the light, the deeper is the shadow. Christ also reveals the evil and enormity of sin as resistance and rejection of God's infinite love, whose height and depth, and length and breadth are indicated in him, surpassing all human measurement and conception. Here also is the revelation of the inevitable doom of the persistent sinner to failure, misery, and ruin, involved in the attempt to attain the rational ends of human existence in a life founded on contradiction and endeavoring to realize absurdity.

4. Christ reveals that man is in his normal condition only in union with God by faith or trust receptive of his free grace. God is man's spiritual environment. Man can grow and bear fruit in the spiritual life only as he is continually receptive of God's gracious and heavenly influences. This is as essential to man's spiritual life, development, and productiveness, as it is to the life of a plant that it be continually receptive of nourishment and quickening from its physical environment. By sin, as we have seen, man alienates himself from God, shuts out his heavenly influences, and sets up for himself in self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-seeking. His right spiritual life and productiveness therefore necessarily cease, as the life and fruitfulness of a branch cease when it is torn from the tree. But in order to the reunion of the sinner with God, there must be, not only the sinner's willingness to trust God and receive his gracious influences, but God must be willing

to receive him and must first come to him with the offers and influences of his grace. This he does in Christ, making atonement for the sinner, opening the way for him to return, and drawing him with the influence of his Spirit to come to him in trust and receive his offered grace. Thus Christ reveals the fact that man can attain his true development and productiveness, can realize the highest possibilities of his being, only in union with God by faith and the continuous reception of his gracious quickening and support. And it is in Christ that God brings his gracious offers and influences to men, environing them with his love, as a plant is environed by the air and the sunshine, to quicken and induce them willingly to receive the offers and influences of his grace. Thus he reveals the futility of all schemes for the renovation of men and the progress of society by scientific enlightenment, by moral rules, by education and culture, by change of laws and institutions, without God. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 22).

5. God in Christ reveals the ideal of humanity. This is simply summing up what has been said, that he reveals the highest possibilities of man both as an individual and in society, the greatness of his sin, and his normal condition in union with God and the possibility of attaining it through Christ.

It is objected that because Christ is divine, because he is the redeemer of man from sin and the founder of God's kingdom, he is so different from other men that he cannot be the ideal man. This fact must be recognized. We do not properly say that in any given case we are to do just what Christ would have done in the same circumstances. As the divine redeemer of men his action in many particulars must be different from that of ordinary men. Living in a distant country and age, with a becoming conformity to the peculiar customs, he would do what it would not be becoming to do now. It is nevertheless true that he has revealed in its essentials the ideal of man. We are to act in his spirit of self-renouncing love and in accordance with the principles which regulated his action. And the fact that he is divine reveals that man, when perfected in love, does attain the moral likeness of God. The ideal of man perfected is in the personal-

ity and character of God. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." "Like as he who called you is holy, so be ye yourselves also holy; because it is written, Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." "When Christ shall be manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who hath this hope set on him purifieth himself even as he is pure." And Paul presents the humiliation of the Son of God in becoming man as the type of all Christian self-renouncing love.[1]

IV. Uniqueness of Jesus as the Ideal Man. — Because Jesus in his earthly life presents the ideal of humanity in the sense explained, he must be unique and above all other men. The truth which I now propose to set forth is, that this very uniqueness of Jesus by which he is distinguished from all other men does itself bring him near to all men, make him intelligible to them, and enable them to feel his affinity for them and to see their own humanity perfected in him. For God in Christ presents the essential elements of the personality common to God and all finite spirits. Hence this very uniqueness of the personality of Christ, this revealing of the finite personality as in all its essentials in the likeness of the divine, this lifting of the finite personality above all the accidental peculiarities of individuals and revealing it in its divine likeness, in its perfect and eternal ideal, is precisely what makes it intelligible to every finite personal spirit as the revelation of his own personality in its perfect ideal. Therefore in him every finite person finds the ideal of his own spiritual personality, free from the peculiarities by which he is distinguished and separated from others, and thus knows himself in his likeness to God and to all finite personal spirits.

I propose to illustrate this truth by presenting three characteristics of Jesus by which, as the ideal man, he is distinguished from all other men; and then to show that by these same characteristics he is brought near to all men and made intelligible and accessible to them.

1. Jesus presents the ideal of humanity in its essential and universal elements, in its completeness and harmony, and in its moral and spiritual perfection.

The first characteristic to be mentioned by which Jesus is distinguished from all other men is this: He presents the uni-

[1] Matth. v. 48; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; 1 John iii. 2, 3; Phil. ii. 5–8.

versal and essential elements of humanity, common to all, rather than the peculiarities by which men are distinguished and separated. In proportion as a man is individualized by peculiarities of constitution, race, acquisitions, and circumstances he is separated from other men, made unintelligible to them, thrown out of their sympathy, and often made positively repulsive. These peculiarities fence off our common humanity into private lots, and we usually notice the fences which divide more than the common ground of humanity on which they stand. Hence, in intercourse with another, one is often aware of something not understood, something interrupting complete sympathy and holding them asunder. It is not so with Jesus. Because he was man, he must live in a definite time and place ; he must have his own peculiar condition and circumstances. But in him it is the elements common to humanity which are prominent, not the peculiarities which distinguish and separate. In reading his life his private peculiarities and relations do not obtrude on us, hedging him about and shutting us away from him. We think of him only as man ; he stands on the open common of humanity accessible alike to all.

He is not separated by differences of race or country. In an Englishman, a Frenchman, an Irishman, a Chinese, the national peculiarities are obtrusive. But we never think of Jesus as a man of another country or age. The life of Jesus has been read in all ages and countries ; yet neither to Gentile nor Jew, neither to ancient nor modern, neither to American, Asiatic, African, nor European, neither to the civilized nor the savage, does his life suggest the idea of an outlandish man, a man separated and made unintelligible by difference of race, age, country, or civilization, — but only the idea of a man, accessible, intelligible, in sympathy with themselves.

He is not separated by peculiarities of his age. A few great geniuses rise above the limits of their age and in all generations interest the cultivated few who study them. But even in them the ignorance, the errors, the peculiarities of their age, obtrude and often make it difficult to understand them. Hence every age must create its own literature. Scarcely a book is read a hundred years after it was written. But Jesus rises clear of all the superstitions and errors of his age, as a great mountain rises clear in the distance above all the inequalities around it. His

teachings are never antiquated. The record of his life and doctrine are in all ages the text-book of the learned and the home-book of the people.

Jesus is not separated from us by difference of education and culture. The ignorant are repelled from the learned, and the learned from the ignorant. But neither ignorance nor learning repels any one from Jesus. He is always on a level with the weakest capacity; he furnishes material for the most profound scholarship and for the most earnest thought in every age. The world has travelled far in its civilization since he walked the hills and valleys of Palestine, but he is still in advance of it, the source, the light and the goal of all its moral and spiritual progress.

Jesus is not separated from us by difference of rank or conditions. He realized in himself the highest and the lowest conditions of life. He was of royal descent, yet he was cradled in a manger and in his public ministry had not where to lay his head. Taking humanity in its noblest blood and holding it in its lowest conditions, he confounded all claims of privilege and honored humanity itself. He identified himself with no distinct class of men. Though he was poor, he did not identify himself with the poor as a class. When a man becomes an advocate of the oppressed, he usually appears as a partisan in their behalf, he draws them about him into a party, he inflames them with animosity against other classes. His party appropriates him. They say: He is our advocate; we have an exclusive interest in him. Jesus makes no such impression. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea approach him as freely as the blind beggar. No man ever thinks of his own condition as either privilege or bar to approaching him. All class privileges melt away before him. Even the privileges of the Jews, which God had given, cease. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

Nor is there anything in his work which separates him from any class or nation. He is not the hero of any nation. He is the Saviour of man. And his work was not in any line of action which could separate him from some and bring him near to others. He was not a great scholar, nor a great discoverer or inventor, nor a great orator, or poet, or painter. He did not devote his life to the reformation of any particular abuse. Any

such limited achievement, if it had constituted the staple of his history, would have set him apart from universal humanity. The interest in him would have been partial, not universal. But he was man, the Son of man. His work was for mankind, — to redeem man from sin, to establish the kingdom of God, the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and to make it prevail over sin and evil throughout all the world, and thus to insure reformation of all abuse and wrong, and the right development both of the individual and of society.

Hence he taught that though he sustained private relations, they were to him symbols of his relation to mankind. "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark iii. 35).

A second characteristic by which Christ is distinguished from other men is that he presents humanity in its completeness and harmony, as distinguished from all narrowness, angularity, one-sidedness, and inconsistency with himself. We have seen that in all his earthly history it is the essential and universal elements of human personality which stand out to view, rather than his private relations and conditions. It may be thought that, thus conceived, the humanity presented in Christ would be colorless and commonplace, without distinctive character, or energy, or points of interest. We are now to look at another aspect of the ideal of humanity in Christ, complemental to that. Through all his peculiar and private relations, conditions, and actions, we see in him the completeness and harmony of all the essential and universal elements of human personality. We see fulness, completeness, and harmony of life and energy in his manhood as a whole, and in every one of its essential elements.

Man is many-sided. He is not equably developed. He has deficiencies and weaknesses. He is even self-contradictory, and, from different sides of his being, inconsistent with himself. It is necessary to conceive of many men put together, in order to a conception of what humanity fully developed may be. Great men are usually great only in a single line; a great poet, a great inventor or discoverer, a great general or statesman, a great orator. But we never think of Jesus so. Though he revealed

the elements of a system of religious truth, simple and comprehensive, which the human mind has never been able to supplement or amend, yet we never think of him as a philosopher or theologian. Though he spoke as never man spoke, yet we never think of him among the great orators. Though he founded a spiritual kingdom which has outlived the convulsions of the ages, and though he was the author of the thought and life which have determined the history and quickened and guided the progress of mankind, yet we never think of him as a statesman or a reformer. No one of these things stands out as the distinctive characteristic of his greatness. Where all is great and all harmonious, we cease to be astonished at any one. This seeming absence of great and brilliant genius and of a great career in his earthly life, makes more wonderful the power which history demonstrates to have been in him; and the more because his public ministry continued less than four years. It compels us to accept, as the only reasonable explanation, the biblical revelation of what he was.

The same completeness appears in his character. A novelist distinguishes his hero by giving him one or two striking traits, which are always conspicuous. We know the character of a neighbor by some marked trait which is the key to it. Jesus reveals the love which is comprehensive of all right character. But no one trait in that comprehensive goodness stands out predominant over all the rest. Hence all attempted delineations of his character fail to satisfy. There are no inequalities, no great elevations and depressions, giving to the picture strong contrasts of light and shade. It is all thrown up into a great table-land, lofty but level. It is like the white light, not so striking as the seven colors of the rainbow, for the reason that it combines them all.

Jesus exhibits the lowest traits of a pure humanity with the highest. He had a body weak as ours, needing sleep and food, subject to weariness, pain, and death. He had all the natural instincts of humanity, the domestic affections, susceptibility to resentment, all the inferior affections common to man with the brutes, which are springs of joy and sorrow, inlets to temptation, motives to action in human life. He had also the higher spiritual capacities which ally men to the angels and to God. He who sat by Jacob's well, wearied with his day's travel, thirsty and hot under

the beating sun at noon, he who exemplified the beauty of friendship in his intimacy with the family of Lazarus, he who came "eating and drinking," interested in all the ongoings of life and mingling sympathetically in scenes of joy and sorrow, — he also is the same who reached the loftiest flights of devotion, and exhibited a godlike love in heroic toil and sacrifice for men, even unto death.

We find in him also the most opposite qualities, ordinarily marking seemingly incompatible types of character. In him is manliness in all its strength, but beautified and refined with gentleness, tenderness, and purity. In him is the union of innocence and power. He is "holy, guileless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." How inoffensive, how humble, how childlike he is, — a celestial childlikeness. Yet in him what strength, the majesty of power in sublime repose. He is at once the Lamb of God and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is beautiful as the rose of Sharon and as the lily of the valley, but with an energy of love that transfigures the world.[1] In him the conscious need of human love and sympathy is joined with the most commanding self-reliance. Not having where to lay his head, he sought rest and refreshment from the ministrations of friendship. He drew John closely to himself, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He said to his disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"; yearning for one more Passover with his disciples, as a father drawing near to death might yearn for one more interview with his family. In Gethsemane he came again and again from the solitude of his agony, seeking the sympathy of his disciples too sleepy to give it. Yet with what calm and majestic self-reliance he stood before Pilate. What an impression his life makes on us that he is not the receiver of pity and help, but the giver. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many" (John xv. 16; Matth. xx. 28). In him were united the tenderest compassion, even for sinners, with inflexible antagonism to sin. His soul moved at every breath of sorrow, as a lake ripples at every breeze. Yet was there none of that complaisance

[1] In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.
JULIA WARD HOWE.

to transgressors which is often a weakness of man's compassion. When he rebukes persistent, self-righteous sinners, he seems to sit already in the majesty of the eternal judge, and all the heavens seem to blacken and thunder with his condemnations. He was humble. His whole life was an abasement of himself; and at his last supper with his disciples he girded himself with a towel and washed his disciples' feet. Yet there was sometimes a grandeur in his look before which officers and soldiers, sent to arrest him, went backward and fell to the ground, and infuriated enemies, crowding to kill him, gave way and let him pass unharmed. He exhibited both the passive virtues and the active. He was a sufferer. All his life was one sorrow, and every act of his life a separate sorrow, separate billows in an ocean of woe, — "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And all the passive virtues of a life of sorrow he exemplified. But equally was his a life of action. He "went about doing good." Bearing his sorrow, he worked without ceasing. Illustrious in all the passive virtues of a life of sorrow, he is equally illustrious in the active energies of a life of achievement.

Jesus combines in himself four distinct types of character, often separated among men. "The Son of man came eating and drinking." He lived a natural, healthy human life. He was a spiritual man; but his spirituality was thoroughly human. He was not a recluse. He lived among men. Crowds thronged him day by day. He participated freely in the scenes and intercourse of private life. He accepted invitations to the tables of both Pharisees and publicans. Now we find him participating in the joy of a wedding, then weeping at a grave with the bereaved, or speaking words of sympathy at a funeral, or taking little children in his arms and blessing them, or refreshing himself in the privacy and intimacy of friendship. Everywhere he mingled with the people, giving cheer and help as opportunity offered. Here is the type of the large-hearted man, disclosing all the natural and innocent human affections and propensities beautified with spiritual love, living in the midst of men and busy in the affairs of human life, with the heart full of benignant interest for all, and the hand always ready to help. But thus living among men, every day crowded with active and fatiguing work, Jesus was capable of the loftiest flights of devotion, and spent whole nights in prayer. While in the world he lived above it in communion with God.

Here is that type of a spiritual character which absorbs the whole life of the devotee. Besides this, he itinerated in circuits from village to village preaching righteousness, calling men to repentance, announcing himself as the promised Messiah and the deliverer of men from sin, proclaiming the kingdom of God on earth, awakening men to spiritual life. Here is the type of character and work marking the evangelist, the missionary, the apostle, the prophet. And besides this, his life was one of continued privation and self-denial; as he said, cautioning one who proposed to follow him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." Here is the type of character which absorbs the whole life of the ascetic, — in fact, so absorbs it that the self-denial excludes the self-sacrifice, and the zeal for self-mortification and penance excludes the Christian love. But Jesus never, like the founder of Buddhism, took the bowl and the yellow robe and proclaimed himself a professional beggar; he never established in his kingdom an aristocracy of beggars, nor taught nor practised the absorption of the soul for years in spiritual meditation in order to attain the vision of God and the transformation into a Buddha or divine being; nor gave any encouragement to the asceticism which seeks suffering for its own sake or values it as a penance insuring merit in the sight of God. His self-denial sprang from the self-sacrificing love which inspired his whole life. He showed his love not in excluding himself from the world, but in seeking men in their sin to save them from their sin. His privation, suffering, and self-denial were never sought for; they were incurred only as they were incidental to the accomplishment of the great work of his love to man. These four types of character exist together in Jesus, and by their union the character escapes the one-sidedness and deformity incident to each of the four when isolated from the others.

In thus revealing the essential elements of a pure humanity in its completeness, Christ reveals them also in their harmony. In him the contradictions which present themselves in the consciousness of sinful men do not exist. The elements counter-working in ordinary men are seen in him to be complemental, each necessary to the perfect development of the man, each in its full strength without weakening the other; and the ordinary one-sidedness and narrowness of man is in him rounded out into full-orbed and har-

monious completeness. Thus Christ is the exemplar to us of a complete, harmonious, and comprehensive humanity, which every man may and should aspire to realize in himself. Like Christ, we may reveal the godlike in the human; tenderness with strength; sympathy with the lowest, manifesting inward union with the highest; indignation against wrong-doers without personal passion or revengeful hate; moral enthusiasm without sentimentality; grace and beauty of character with heroic self-sacrifice, energy, and achievement; saintliness with manliness or womanliness; interest in the unseen world inspiring, broadening, and guiding interest in this world and in the people among whom we live; communion with God drawing us into closer and wider union and communion with men. As man approaches this ideal, the saint will not be the ghostly and ghastly impersonation of other-worldliness; the hero will not be the rude impersonation of strength; but the saint and the hero will be united in one and the same man in the ideal of complete and harmonious humanity revealed in Christ.

It remains to notice a third characteristic of the ideal of humanity in Jesus by which he is distinguished from other men. He presents humanity in its moral and spiritual perfection.

This has been questioned by few who have known his history. I shall not debate the question. The denial of the sinlessness of Jesus has usually been an after-thought, not suggested by the facts of his history, but rendered necessary to maintain consistency with other previously avowed opinions. Theodore Parker argued that Jesus was sinful, as an inference: because Jesus was a man he must have participated in the moral imperfection common to all men. Mr. Hennel supports his denial of Christ's sinlessness by special pleading of rare ingenuity, the necessity of which is proof that the facts in our Saviour's recorded history cannot be easily made to suggest moral imperfection. It is enough for my present argument that for nineteen hundred years the life of Jesus has been more widely and intimately known and more earnestly studied than any other human life, and for nineteen hundred years has made the impression of perfect moral loveliness, as a rose in bloom impresses all comers with its sweetness and beauty; and not only so, but in all these ages it has aroused impassioned admiration and self-renouncing devotedness in innumerable multitudes of men and women. He is the ideal man. He is the divine

law revealed in the concrete in a human life, — a perfect childhood, seeming like a pure beam of heaven's light gliding down to earth, unsoiled, as the sunshine is unsoiled by earthly contact, — a perfect and celestial childhood unfolding into a perfect manhood, — a man who never utters a confession of sin even to God, who never utters an apology or regret for word or deed. In any other man a piety without confession of sin, a life without apology or regret for mistake or wrong-doing, would be an impertinence. But in Jesus his whole life vindicates it and justifies his own challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Even Renan declares, "The character of Jesus, so far from having been embellished, has been diminished by his biographers."

As morally and spiritually perfect, Jesus stands in antagonism to all the ignorance and prejudice, the narrowness and bigotry, the selfishness and sin by which men are brought into antagonism to one another. But also because he is perfect, he always presents humanity in all its breadth and completeness, the elements and characteristics of humanity in its perfect development. Thus he lays hold of humanity in its essential constitution and thereby draws all men to himself.

He is, then, the ideal man. I have said that it takes many men put together to make one complete man. We may go further. It takes the whole of humanity, from its beginning to its final and highest consummation after ages of progress, to show all the powers and attainments that exist potential in man, waiting development and manifestation. Jesus as perfect is the ideal man and as such is the representative man. As the New Testament calls him, he is the Second Adam. He is the representative of man in the full development of all his moral and spiritual potentialities. He is also, in his earthly life, the representative of man in his weakness and suffering, in his condemnation and deliverance, in his conflict with sin and evil, and in his death. It is only as he is exalted in the heavenly glory that he represents humanity in the complete development of all its potentialities and its complete restoration to its normal character and condition. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, when dying, saw the Son of Man in the opening heaven, bearing his human nature glorified (Acts vii. 54, 55). Heaven, therefore, is not to extinguish human nature, but to perfect it, — all that is gross and mortal dropped, but human nature still, in its likeness to the divine. In

heaven we shall not see about us ghostly beings, so changed that the human characteristics will no more be recognized. But we shall see "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). Heaven, therefore, will from the first seem home-like.

> What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven; and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on earth is thought.

Here we see a foundation for the fulfilment of Christ's wonderful promise, "The glory which thou hast given me I have given them;" and for the words of John, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (John xvii. 22; 1 John iii. 2).

2. These aspects of the ideal man by which Christ is distinguished from every other man also make him intelligible and accessible to all men, and are sources of his moral and spiritual influence and power in all ages. In proportion as any one by great genius, goodness, and service raises himself above other men and distinguishes himself from them, he belongs to mankind and is appropriated by all men; he can no longer be appropriated by any people in provincial exclusiveness. This is pre-eminently true of Christ. The uniqueness of Christ as the ideal man is itself a part of the attraction by which he draws all men unto himself. This is exemplified in the peculiar practical significance and power of each of the three aspects of Christ as the ideal man which have been presented.

First, the fact that the Saviour presents the essential elements of humanity common to all men, rather than the peculiarities which distinguish and separate them, reveals the dignity and worth of men in their individual personality, the sacredness of their rights, their equality and brotherhood, and the obligation to serve them in self-renouncing and universal love. In the most degraded outcast, in the most helpless victim of oppression, the nature that lies crushed and agonizing beneath human injustice is the same nature which the Son of God took and in which he suffered the cruelty of the wicked, and realized the ideal perfection of man. Therefore the crushed victim of wrong-doing can look to him for sympathy, and appropriate to himself in their full significance the words: "He was in all points tempted like

as we are, yet without sin. . . . For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them who are tempted." Here is revealed the worth of man as man and independently of his condition. Here is the sacredness of human rights, bound up in the very nature of man, inhering not in the accidents, but in the raw material of humanity, and declared in the life of Christ, the Son of Man. Here also is the significance of the equality and brotherhood of man. In the presence of Jesus all privileges and distinctions disappear. Before him all men stand on the same level, — men before the Son of God, who ennobles their common nature by being the Son of Man, — sinners coming for mercy to their common Redeemer, who tasted death for every man, — children of God before their common Father, and Christ their elder brother. Then, when they look away from him into the faces of each other, they no longer see Europeans, Asiatics, Africans, Americans, rich or poor, high-born or low-born, learned or ignorant, but men of the same nature with themselves and brethren in the family of God, their common Father in Heaven. And here is the spring of true philanthropy and of all missions to save men from sin: "For my sake." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." To repudiate the fact of the rights and brotherhood of man, to repudiate our obligation as "debtors" "as much as in us lies," "both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish," is to repudiate the essential fact of the Christian religion, the fact which makes our religion to be Christianity, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And to repudiate this essential fact of Christianity, the historical Christ, is to repudiate the grandest demonstration of the worth of man, of the sacredness of human rights, and of universal brotherhood, and the mightiest influence in giving to these truths practical efficacy in human civilization. And to hold the Christian idea of man as related to God and of the life of love, while rejecting the historical Christ, is to expect to use the water of life after destroying the springs from which it flows.

In this respect other religions are in direct contrast to Christianity. Caste is a legitimate development of the pantheistic religions of India, and in their sacred books are found pronunciations of the divine displeasure and punishment on any one

who should teach the sacred books to one of the lowest caste. A similar exclusion of the common people appears in the inner mysteries of the religion of Egypt. Plato taught that the knowledge of the one only God is so difficult to be attained that it can be communicated only to those of high intellectual culture. Cicero said: "It is difficult to find that parent of this universe, and when you find him it is wrong (*nefas*) to make him publicly known." The Roman patricians held that they alone as "families" had Penates or Lares. A plebeian, since he could not found a "family," could have no household gods. In the same spirit the Pharisees in Christ's day said: "This multitude, that knoweth not the law, are accursed." One of the "masters" among the Kabbalistic Jews taught that they who are not sealed as sons of God by circumcision "are not the sons of God but the children of uncleanness. Wherefore it is not lawful to contract familiarity with them or to teach them the words of the law." Another said: "Whosoever instructeth any uncircumcised person, though but in the least precept of the law, doeth the same as if he should destroy the world and deny the name of the Holy Blessed One." We see in contrast the profound significance of the words of Christ, when he presented it as distinctive of Christianity and a decisive evidence that he is the Christ, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them."

Secondly, because the Saviour took human nature in its completeness and harmony he consecrated all that is human. The tendency has been to regard secular life as unconsecrated and profane. When the soul awakes to eternity and its interests, it is not strange that it should turn away from all finite things as trifles. What is time in comparison with eternity? What is man in comparison with God? What is this world in comparison with heaven? Let me refuse earthly enjoyments, let me turn my back on earthly interests as impertinences; let me shut myself up in solitude to thinking of eternity, to prayer and preparation for death and the life beyond. But the human life of Christ rebukes this tendency. It hallows human life itself and all its interests. In him the light of the spiritual and the eternal pours on humanity, not to wither and scorch it, but to beam all over it like the sunshine over the earth, and to warm and quicken it, as sunshine warms and quickens the clodded ground into fruitfulness and beauty.

In a human nature and a human life Jesus exercised the lofty capacities by which man is capable of being rapt in devotion, like the saints that worship before God's throne; by which he is able, like the flaming angelic ministers, to go on divine missions of love to men; like the prophets and apostles, like the reformers and the martyrs, to illuminate the world with God's truth, to be illustrious by heroic deeds and sacrifices, to effect reformations which constitute epochs in history. But he took also all the inferior qualities of human nature, the instinctive propensities which play so beautifully in life, the very weaknesses inseparable from humanity. Joys, tears, work, weariness, compassion, filial and friendly love, pain, death, all qualities of sinless humanity, were his. Thus he has hallowed all that belongs to humanity and to human life. Palestine is called the Holy Land, because there the Saviour lived and died. But what he consecrated and made forever sacred was not the country over which he walked, but rather the human nature and human life in which he lived the perfect man. Thus all which belongs to humanity is hallowed. The thought should inspire and ennoble us every day and in every act. In every condition and act of life a man may be like Jesus. In pain and sorrow he may think, So Jesus suffered and through pain and sorrow revealed at once the perfection of man and the graciousness of God. In work, whether in the shop, or the counting-room, or on the ship's deck, or in the nursery or the kitchen, we may remember that Jesus, who wrought the redemption of the world, labored with his own hands, took little children in his arms and blessed them, cared for his mother, and alike in a childhood of obedience, an early manhood of handicraft, and a public ministry as the spiritual teacher and Saviour of men, he showed forth the ideal perfection of human character, revealed the fact that man in his right moral and spiritual development is in the likeness of God, and that man may be god-like in character and action and realize his highest moral and spiritual development in any sphere and under any conditions of life.[1]

We are to consider, thirdly, the practical influence of the fact that Christ is the ideal man, realizing in himself man's moral and spiritual perfection.

[1] Gregory of Nazianzen says of Jesus: "Perchance he sleeps in order to bless sleep; perchance he is weary in order to sanctify weariness; perchance he weeps to give dignity to tears."

Its first influence must be to reveal to us our imperfection and sin. For in him the law of God is presented in the concrete with the greatest clearness and power.

But in him the law does not come revealing only our sin and condemnation, a power to menace and alarm us and drive us to despair; because in him we see the ideal of the law realized in a human nature. He presents himself as the ideal which we also may realize; he draws us to himself that we may become like him, and brings the glad tidings of God's grace sufficient to receive and to help every sinner who would turn from sin to God and struggle upward to the realization of the ideal of perfected humanity in the life of faith in God and love to God and man. In him are at once our pattern and goal, our inspiration, guidance, and strength. He reveals man to himself while revealing God to man. Beneath man's sensuality, impurity, and worldliness, he reveals the germs and potentialities of spiritual life. Beneath even man's sin, his self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking and self-glorifying, he reveals unsuspected capacities for self-sacrificing love, for self-forgetting service of others, for purity and spirituality above the life of sense, for rapt devotion and communion with God, for generous friendship, for childlike simplicity and innocence, for peaceful faith in God, the germs and potentialities of heaven within the life on earth. By his heavenly touch Christ awakens man to the consciousness of his spiritual capacities and relations, and quickens him to look at the things not seen and to live to realize the highest possibilities of his spiritual being.

It may be objected that this view of the life and influence of Jesus is due to Evangelical bias. It may be answered that many writers, who can never be suspected of Evangelical bias, have recognized the fact of the wonderful and unique life and influence of Jesus. Even from the facts which they recognize it seems legitimate and necessary for every theist to infer that they can be accounted for only if Jesus was pre-eminently the revealer of God to men, the revealer of man to himself, and the mediator between God and man, who brings to man the true religion and the true knowledge of God, who is establishing and advancing his true kingdom on the earth, the reign of righteousness and good-will, and in whom God is reconciling the world unto himself.

The following are a few of many testimonies of this kind which might be cited : —

GOETHE : "I esteem the gospels as thoroughly genuine ; for there shines from them the reflected splendor of a sublimity, proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested on earth." — "Conversations with Eckermann," iii. 371.

LECKY : "The Platonist exhorted men to imitate God, the Stoic, to follow reason, the Christian, to the love of Christ. The later Stoics had often united their notions of excellence in an ideal sage, and Epictetus had even urged his disciples to set before them some man of surpassing excellence and to imagine him continually near them ; but the utmost the Stoic ideal could become was a model for imitation, and the admiration it inspired could never deepen into affection. It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions, has not only been the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft and persecution and fanaticism that have defaced the church, it has preserved in the character of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration." — "Hist. of European Morals," vol. ii. p. 9.

THEODORE PARKER : "As Jesus spoke for eternity, his truths ride on the wings of time ; as he spoke for man, they are welcome, beautiful, and blessing wherever man is found, and so must be till time and man shall cease."

J. S. MILL : "It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews or of Nature, who, being idealized, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And, whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his teaching. . About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed on earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity ; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of vir-

tue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." — "Three Essays in Religion," pp. 254, 255.

RENAN: "Jesus has founded religion in humanity, as Socrates founded philosophy in it, as Aristotle founded science. . . . We have not left behind us, nor shall we leave behind, the essential idea that Jesus originated. He has fixed for all time the conception of pure religion. Jesus has founded the absolute religion. . . . Whatever transformations dogma may undergo, Jesus will still be the author of pure sentiment in religion. The Sermon on the Mount will not be superseded. . . . Christianity alone remains in possession of the future. . . . The world will ever be religious, and Christianity, in a large sense, is religion's last word. . . . The foundation of the true religion is his work. After him there is nothing more but to develop and fructify. . . . Let us, then, place the person of Jesus on the highest summit of human grandeur. . . . Marcus Aurelius left behind him delightful books, an execrable son, a transitory world. Jesus remains to humanity an inexhaustible source of moral regenerations. . . . This sublime person, who each day still presides over the destinies of the world, we may call divine, . . . in this sense that Jesus is that individual who has caused his species to make the greatest advance toward the divine. . . . Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus." — "The Future of Religion" in "Studies of Religious History and Criticism," Frothingham's Trans., pp. 352, 353, 354, 384; "Life of Jesus," Wilbour's Trans., chap. xxviii. pp. 365, 368, 370, 375, 376.

DE WETTE: "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified; and that nothing loftier offers itself to humanity than the God-manhood realized in him and the kingdom of God which he founded — an idea and problem not yet rightly understood and incorporated into the life." — "Comm. on Rev.," p. vi. third ed.

Author of "SUPERNATURAL RELIGION": "The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained or even attainable by humanity. The influence of his spiritual religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of his own character. Surpassing in his sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Châkya-Mouni, and putting to the blush the somewhat sullied, though generally admirable teaching of Socrates and Plato and the whole round of Greek philosophers, he presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with his own lofty principles, so that the 'Imitation of Christ' has become almost the final word in the preaching of his religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence."

MATTHEW ARNOLD: "Try all the ways of righteousness you can think of, and you will find no way that brings you to it except the way of Jesus; but that does bring you to it."

Author of "Ecce Homo": "The story of his (Jesus') life will always remain the one record in which the moral perfection of man stands revealed in its root and unity, the hidden spring made palpably manifest by which the whole machine is moved. And as, in the will of God, this unique man was elected to a unique sorrow, and holds as undisputed a sovereignty in suffering as in self-devotion, all lesser examples and lives will forever hold a subordinate place and serve chiefly to reflect light on the central and original example."

3. In this exhibition of the ideal of humanity in Jesus Christ we have a striking confirmation of his historical reality and of the truth of the narratives of his life recorded in the New Testament. The portraiture of him as there presented is explicable only as the portraiture of a real character, a portraiture drawn from life. The presentation of him is explicable only as historically true. The fact that such a person and such a life are delineated in the New Testament is proof that such a person actually lived that life.

The spirit of man is so great that his ideals surpass the realities about him. Visitors to Niagara at first find the Fall less than they had imagined. We find no finite object, however grand or beautiful, that equals the ideals of grandeur and beauty which the man can create within his own soul. We know no human being, however good, but the mind can form a conception of a higher goodness. If one would love another, his love must hide the imperfections of its object in order to love with unmingled admiration and devotedness. It is proverbial that love is blind. And the scripture says: "Love covereth a multitude of sins." Love idealizes its objects, by its own radiance investing them with the perfection it admires. The Highland Mary of Burns is no longer a peasant girl but an ideal of tenderness and beauty. Dante's Beatrice is no longer an ordinary mortal, but, transfigured with a heavenly glory, is the type of womanhood appointed to quicken and purify man in the spiritual life and to lead him to see the heavenly glory. But in the story of Jesus we find a character in which the reality surpasses the mind's conceptions; a character not illuminated with poetical creations but delineated in the simplest narrative of the events and actions of a human life. And yet it is a character which is the archetype for our ideals of moral and spiritual perfection, and by the study of which we amplify and complete our conception of the ideal man. Such a conception of perfect humanity

no mind had created before Jesus appeared; and no human imagination has been able to amend or improve it in all the centuries following. The progress of eighteen hundred years finds him still in advance, — the standard of moral and spiritual perfection which humanity in its progressive improvement is always approaching but has never attained.

It must be added that the profoundest thinking of philosophers, in ignorance or forgetfulness of him, has never been able to delineate in the concrete the conception of such a character, and has even declared such a conception unattainable. Cicero said the perfect man had never been found, and alludes to the disagreement of philosophers as to the conception of what the perfect man would be, if he should appear. They could agree in some more or less clear recognition of the law of love as the principle of right character, but not in the details of its concrete expression in life. Kant says: "To realize the ideal in an example given in the world of experience, — for example, to delineate in a romance the character of a perfect man, — is impossible. Nay, more, there is something absurd in the attempt. And the result must be little edifying, as the natural imperfections which would continually break in on the perfection of the idea, would destroy the illusion of the story, and make the idea itself appear ridiculous."[1] And yet the ideal man, the delineation of whom, in the concrete, philosophy has declared impossible, is all at once delineated by four unlettered men, — and that in the most difficult manner, not as an abstract conception but in the actual details of a life and without the slightest attempt at philosophical analysis or poetical illumination, — and that in four narratives, differing as to details, yet all making the same impression that Jesus is the perfect and ideal man. The simple fact that these four lives of Jesus are written is demonstration of their historical truth. They must be narratives of a real life and the portraitures of a real person.

4. This conclusion is confirmed by the benign and mighty influence which Christ has exerted through all the centuries since his death. On this vast subject I must confine myself to a few suggestions.

The unprecedented power of spiritual quickening and renova-

[1] Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Dialectic, Book II. chap. iii. sec 1.

tion, which went out from Christ into the world and has been energizing in it ever since, began to reveal itself with wonderful energy within a few days after Christ's ascension. It cannot be accounted for as the natural outgrowth of the age. The age in which Jesus lived on earth, was, perhaps, of all ages the most barren of spiritual life. Polytheism had decayed into skepticism; Judaism had degenerated into the formalism of the Pharisee and the unbelief of the Sadducee. Jesus was in all particulars unlike his age and contrary to it. And not only this, — he introduced into it a new life and commenced its transformation into his own likeness. The world lay like a burned field, nothing visible but the blackened cinders of skepticism and the scorched and hollow stubble of empty profession. Jesus came; and life, verdure and fruit appeared. There went forth from the very publicans, Matthews; and from the very Pharisees, Pauls. From that ungodly age there went forth godly men and women, confessors and martyrs, a living church of God, a power of faith and love, which have been the admiration of all succeeding ages. Demonstrably, here was not a life spontaneously developed from humanity of itself, but a life coming down on humanity from above, an energy of God's redeeming grace entering as a new and renovating power into the life and history of man.

This argument may be developed by examining in detail the rise of Christianity as narrated in the New Testament. Lyttleton's argument for the truth of Christianity from the conversion and life of Paul is an example. The indisputable facts in the life of Paul are explicable only on the admission that Christianity is true. Similar evidence forces itself on our notice at every point in the history.

Further evidence is found in the prevalence of Christianity after the events recorded in the New Testament until the recognition of Christianity by Constantine. Our Lord said to his disciples: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." It was a few sheep among many wolves. And when the sheep conquer the wolves, it is evident that there is a power working for them above that of the sheep. The conflict of Christianity with heathenism, as related by Uhlhorn or any trustworthy historian, makes the irresistible impression that the Saviour's comparison of the sheep among wolves was not an

overstatement, and that nothing but the truth of Christianity and the reality of the divine presence and power which it claimed can explain its triumph.

Another line of evidence is found in the persistence of Christianity through the revolutions of the ages, the changes of civilization, the progress of science and art, and the reconstruction of society, and its continued power, under all changes and progress, to awaken and develop the spiritual life in man, and to satisfy the awakened spiritual aspirations. Like all things human, the Christian church has sometimes fallen into error of thought and corruption of life. But there has always remained in it the power of revival. In its deepest corruption the coals have been living beneath the ashes, ready to kindle anew into the living fire. And as the ages have passed on, it has never been without living witnesses, the thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, who have attested in their own experience its spiritual truth and power.

Still another line of this evidence is the influence of Christianity on the progress of civilization. In the decay of the Roman empire and the irruption of the barbarians, there was a dissolution of society which made necessary a reconstruction of the nations and the creation of a new civilization. In this terrific transition, Christianity contributed more than any other agency to preserve and reconstitute society and to give a right direction to the progress of civilization. Says Lecky: "The great characteristic of Christianity, and the great moral proof of its divinity is, that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe, and that it has discharged this office, not so much by the inculcation of a system of ethics, however pure, as by the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect ideal. The moral progress of mankind can never cease to be distinctively and intensely Christian so long as it consists of a gradual approximation to the character of its Christian founder. There is, indeed, nothing more wonderful in the history of the human race than the way in which that ideal has traversed the lapse of ages, acquiring new strength and beauty with each advance of civilization, and infusing its beneficent influence into every sphere of thought and action."[1]

It is remarkable that, in the modern progress of man, we find

[1] History of Rationalism in Europe, vol. i. p. 312.

in Christianity the principles which the progress expresses, and by which it is inspired and guided. When any great movement begins, in which man rises to a higher plane of life, if we examine it as it advances, we see the principles which are moving and directing it, deposited, like seeds for subsequent growth, in the life and teachings of Christ and the revelation of God in him as recorded in the Bible.

Certainly there is nothing in the life of Christ as a mere man that is adequate to account for these wondrous results. He was born in a despised village in a remote province of the empire, worked till the age of thirty as a carpenter with his father, had but a limited education, as the Jews asked with surprise, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 15); his whole public ministry was less than four years, and ended in his crucifixion as a malefactor. If any one had then suggested that he was to exert an influence mightier than that of the Roman emperor, was to be the object of loving trust and service to millions of men through all subsequent centuries, and the mightiest spiritual power in advancing the progress of men in virtue and religion, the suggestion would have been laughed at. The whole history of Christianity shows that there was nothing in Jesus as a mere man which can account for his historical power and influence in the world.

In view of this great personage and his wonderful life among men, revealing the grand possibilities of humanity and bringing into human history the loving energy of God to quicken men to the realization of these great possibilities, what shall we say of those who deny that Jesus Christ ever lived, or who insist that he was a mere man? It is like seeing the river of life flowing through human history, and the trees of life along its banks, and insisting that there is no fountain or spring from which it flows. And if there was no historical Christ such as is presented in the New Testament, who invented him? Who could have invented Sir Isaac Newton? Only one who could discover the law of gravitation and be the author of his mathematical calculations and astronomical discoveries by which he verified it, — only one who could write the "Principia." It would take a Newton to invent a Newton. Who could have invented Jesus the Christ, the author of so grand and divine ideas, the revealer of God and man, the source and ever-energizing power of all

Christian progress? It would take a Christ to invent a Christ. Verily there is no other name under heaven given among men, in which we can be saved. His is the name above every name, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and every tongue must confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PART II

GOD THE CREATOR

CHAPTER XII

THE CREATION

I. The Doctrine of Creation. — The doctrine is that God is the cause of the being or existence of the universe, and not merely of its arrangement or evolution. The doctrine of God's preservation of the universe is that, while God has given to the universe being distinct from himself, it has reality only as continuously and progressively realizing God's thought, as always dependent on his power, and revealing his presence. The two doctrines are inseparable; God cannot create a being that can exist independent of himself. The two doctrines will therefore be treated together. The significance of the two is that God is always the causative antecedent of the universe, and that the universe is always dependent on him, and is always revealing him. The universe is all that is conditioned. The Creator is the Unconditioned and the All-conditioning.

The doctrine distinguishes theism from dualism, whether in the form of the eternity of God and of matter, or in the form of the eternity of two personal beings, the Good and the Evil. It also distinguishes theism from monism, pantheistic or materialistic. And, by its doctrine of preservation and God's immanence in the universe, it distinguishes theism from Epicureanism and deism, which recognize God only as the First Cause, who created and completed the universe at a stroke, and thereafter is not active in it.

God's action in creating and preserving the universe, is the free action of his will. Thus theism is distinguished from Gnostic theories of necessary emanation through successive æons. Creating and preserving by the action of free will is everywhere the scriptural representation: "He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." And it was shown in the discussion of God's attributes that, from the very essence of his being as absolute Spirit, all his action in creating and evolving the universe must be free, as the expression in the finite of his own free choice or self-determination eternally in harmony with the truths and laws, and progressively realizing the archetypal ideals and ends eternal in himself, the absolute Reason. And this enlarges and enriches our idea of the creative action of God. It is no longer an exertion of naked almightiness, creating something out of nothing. It is God, the absolute, personal Reason, eternally self-determined to energize in harmony with the eternal principles and laws of absolute Reason, expressing, in the forms of space and time and finite personality, the archetypal thought of his reason, and realizing the archetypal ideals and ends of perfection and good. It is God realizing in the finite the thought of perfect wisdom in the action of perfect love. Novalis said that force is the infinite vowel, and matter the consonant in the book of nature in which God expresses his thought. It is true that even in the physical world of matter and force God is expressing his thought, and its deepest reality is in the thought which it expresses, not in the symbols or letters through which it is expressed. But it is in personal beings, in the moral and spiritual system, that we read most plainly the tnought of God, and understand the significance of the universe and the ends for which it has been created, sustained, and developed.

Creation is the act of God alone. No increase of finite power could bring it any nearer to creative power. It is a power differing not in degree only but in kind from all power of finite beings. The nearest analogy is the power of creating an ideal in thought and then realizing it on the canvas, or in a building or a machine, or in any concrete reality. Or a man may be said to create his own character by the free action of his will. But these are not creative acts, for they originate no being. Hence any attempt of the human imagination to picture the creative act of God must always be inadequate. The creative action of God may be known

as a fact, but it can never be fully comprehended by the finite mind.

Creation is compatible with any subsequent process of arrangement or evolution. Professor Haeckel and others have claimed, with an air of triumph, that evolution disproves creation. But it is not so. Evolution gives no explanation of the origin of the homogeneous stuff itself, nor of the beginning of motion in it. It leaves the necessity of a creation as imperative as it was before. And without God immanent in it the evolution cannot account for its own continuance and for the higher orders of being which at successive epochs appear in the universe. Evolution is incompatible only with the doctrine that God completed the universe at a stroke in one creative fiat of his will, and then left it to go of itself. On the contrary, the theistic conception of God, as realizing and expressing his thought in the universe in the forms of the finite, demands an evolution of some sort always going on. It is only when God expresses his thought in the finite that eternity discloses itself as time measured by events. And God fills all measured time with action in the finite. This continual action of God in the universe is the only supposition on which the fundamental maxim of physical science is possible, that the sum of all force potential and energizing must be always the same. This cannot be true of a finite force, but only of power that is absolute and infinite. When God creates he does not add to his power, he only reveals it by realizing his thought in a finite form. And should he annihilate a finite being, he would not annul the power which had been revealed in it; he would only recall it into himself. It is only the absolute that cannot be made greater by addition nor less by substraction.

That God is the creator of the universe is clearly recognized everywhere in the Bible. It is needless to cite particular texts. So far as the universe, in the constitution and course of nature and the constitution, experience, and history of man, reveals the existence of God, it equally reveals him as distinct from the universe and as its creator. The existence of God, the absolute Reason, expressing his thought in the universe which he creates, and which is always dependent on him, is further made certain by the fact that this alone removes the difficulties and contradictions otherwise insuperable in both empirical and philosophical science.

II. The Cosmogony in Genesis. — The forms in which truth is presented in the opening chapters of Genesis are similar to those in which the Semitic peoples, from among whom the Hebrews had originally emigrated to Canaan, had expressed their traditional conceptions of God and of his relations to the world and to man. This is one of the points established by recent researches into the traditions of these peoples and the deciphering of inscriptions found among the ruins of their ancient cities. The conceptions of God and of the supernatural expressed in these traditional forms were pagan and polytheistic. But in the opening of Genesis, while these familiar forms are retained, they are divested of the false conceptions of God, and are used as the medium for conveying the revelation of the one only living and true God, of his creation of the universe, and of his real relations to it, and to man from the beginning of human history.[1]

If it is asked why these forms were used, the answer is obvious. Always, if truth is to be understood by any person, it must be communicated in language and forms of thought with which he is familiar. If truth respecting God is to be communicated to a child or to a savage, it can be done only in the words of their meagre language and in conceptions and forms of thought familiar to their undeveloped minds. For the same reason truths

[1] Religion is a common characteristic of mankind. It is the response of the human spirit to the presence of God revealed to all in the constitution and course of nature and in the constitution and history of man, as well as in the experience of individuals. Thus all men attain more or less true ideas of God, of the spirit of man, and of the supernatural. But in interpreting these revelations to their own minds, men form conceptions of God and of his relations to men, which, notwithstanding whatever truth there may be in them, are defective, fanciful, and erroneous. These perpetuated by tradition, come to be expressed in various legends, myths, and superstitions. Hence arose the accounts of the creation and of the early condition and history of man, the forms of which are used in Genesis to declare the doctrine of monotheism. Some of these ethnic legends and myths are doubtless reminiscences, more or less faded, embellished by fancy and etherealized into myths, of momentous events or of remarkable heroes, "the mighty men which were of old, men of renown" (Gen. vi. 4). The tradition of the flood, for example, has been found among almost all races and tribes of men. It is doubtless the reminiscence of a great catastrophe of that kind in the regions inhabited by the primitive men. This, indeed, the modern theories of geology show to be not only possible but probable. Such traditions, as well as the incontrovertible historical evidence of events discovered among the inscriptions and other remains of these peoples, confirm the historical trustworthiness of the biblical narratives.

respecting God and his relation to the world and to man were declared in that remote age to the Hebrews in forms of thought already familiar and probably venerable for their antiquity when Genesis was written.

This fact must be recognized as of fundamental importance in every attempt to answer the questions respecting the form in which truth is presented in these chapters, whether these questions arise from the point of view of literary and historical criticism or of modern science.[1]

I do not propose, however, to discuss these questions here. I shall confine myself to presenting some of the great and fundamental truths or realities here revealed, the revelation of which in these chapters remains indisputable, whatever theory criticism or science may adopt as to the form in which the truth is presented. The revelation stands independent of the form in which it was made. Whether this ancient document, as to its form, consists of one code or of more than one, whether it is regarded as a literal narrative, or a poem, or a panoramic word-picture, or a vision, or a symbolic or allegorical representation, on any theory whatever as to its form, it still remains indisputable that it recognizes and suggests, and for the most part clearly reveals the great and fundamental truths or realities which I shall point out. And the proper use to make of the document is in studying the realities which it reveals. If one has a telescope he does not occupy himself in taking it to pieces to see how it is made. This is properly done now and then by an optician, whose business it is to make and inspect telescopes. But for the rest of us, we are to look through it and see what we can see. If we see heavenly bodies which the naked eye of man never saw, and can see more clearly those already known, we conclude it is a real telescope and use it to extend and confirm our knowledge. So we are to look through this revelation of God. If it reveals great truths, great realities, now undisputed, which apart from this revelation man was not acquainted with till ages after Genesis was written, and which have now become, as the revelations of the telescope have become, the common knowledge of mankind, then we justly con-

[1] For example, the cuneiform inscription recording the Babylonian tradition of the flood presents points of diversity similar to those in the biblical narrative, from which critics infer in the latter two distinct and incompatible codes. — See article by Prof. John P. Davis, "Presbyterian Review," July, 1889, pp. 415–431.

clude that it was a real revelation of God and we thankfully and joyfully use it to clarify and extend our knowledge of him.

The objects of all human knowledge are included in the three spheres, Nature or the physical system, God, and Man or the moral system of finite personal beings under the government of God. The three opening chapters of Genesis declare great and fundamental truths or realities in each of these spheres of knowledge. This makes these chapters, irrespective of all claims to inspiration, more significant and wonderful than any portion of ancient literature outside of the Bible. Nor does the form in which it presents these truths detract from the value and importance of the truths nor from the evidence of its authority as a revelation of God.

1. First to be considered are the truths here recognized respecting nature or the physical system. But before mentioning these it is necessary to attend to some preliminary considerations pertaining to questions as to the harmony of Genesis with modern physical science.

The original creative action must have been wholly in the sphere of the supernatural. God, the creator, was the only observer and his own wisdom his only counsellor. It was entirely beyond the range of human observation. Therefore human science is incompetent to describe it. On this point the student of physical science can speak with no more authority than any other person. As to the evolution of the universe after it is created science has unrestricted right of search. Theology accepts all facts and laws which science has fully established, but by no means all speculative theories and hypotheses which the imagination of scientists may invent.

The narrative in Genesis is written in popular, not in scientific language. It presents things as they appear without attempting scientific analysis and description. Modern scientific nomenclature and terminology, if used, would have been unintelligible. The scientific names and forms of that day, if there had been any, would long ago have lost all significance. But popular language, describing things as they appear to men in all generations, is always and everywhere understood.

Theories of cosmogony propounded by scientists are receiving frequent modifications. The theories of one generation are rejected by the next. The Wernerian or Neptunian theory that the

rocks were deposited from water, gave place to the Huttonian or Vulcanist theory, which gave prominence to the action of heat and the cooling of melted matter. The theory of catastrophes, with which Hugh Miller and President Edward Hitchcock attempted to reconcile Genesis, has given place, since Lyell wrote, to the theory of uniformity. All cosmogonies are taken up and modified by the theory of evolution ; and already it has been proposed to modify this theory itself by giving more prominence to the formation and action of meteoric dust and its condensation into meteoric masses. It is idle to attempt to reconcile Genesis with the cosmogony of science, so long as the latter is immature and changing in the process of growth.

It must also be borne in mind that these chapters in Genesis were not written to instruct man in physical science, but in the knowledge of God. They were not written to reveal the facts and laws of physical science, but to reveal God. To study them as designed to teach physical science would be like dissecting the Madonna di San Sisto of Raphael, subjecting the coloring matter to chemical analysis, determining how many grains of each kind of material were used, and so trying to prove that the picture reveals some facts of modern science and is in harmony with it, forgetting that what it really reveals is the genius of the painter and the ideal which he had created and revealed on the canvas.

And it must be remembered that Genesis is here the record of God's revelation of himself in its beginning. Because God can reveal himself only in the finite, and in his action on and in the finite after it has been created, this beginning of revelation must be incomplete and its literary and scientific setting must be also incomplete and inadequate. As he continues to reveal himself in his action in the physical universe and in the course of human history, and as, under God's continued revealing of himself, man advances in development, God's revelation of himself becomes in itself clearer and fuller, and the media for communicating it, the setting in which it is presented to man, become more adequate. Mr. Huxley has presented a dreadful picture of strangled theological serpents lying around the cradle of every science, like the serpents of old around the cradle of the infant Hercules. But the theism cradled in the first chapters of Genesis, in its life and growth through all generations, has survived multitudes of perishing forms of science. Instead of Mr. Huxley's conception, it

would be nearer historical fact to represent theology and physical science as having both been once in their cradles, and both as having strangled many an error, as they forced their way to larger and clearer knowledge of the truth. For there is no real antagonism and no necessary occasion for controversy between them.

While the account of the creation in Genesis was not designed to teach physical science, it does recognize important facts and principles pertaining to the physical system.

It recognizes in it order, continuity, and law. It recognizes it as a system. The Bible nowhere intimates the existence of chaos in which innumerable atoms were driven about by chance and nothing was orderly under law. That was a fiction which had some currency among the Greeks and afterwards among the Romans; but it is entirely absent from all records of Hebrew thought. On the contrary, the creation of the universe and its development through successive epochs are presented as caused by the intelligent action of God proceeding in an orderly way from epoch to epoch, and bringing into existence a vast and complicated universe in which all parts are fitted to each other in a reasonable and orderly system. The fact that the writer resolves all the nature-gods of the heathen into mere objects and powers of nature, themselves created by the one only God, and comprehends the whole universe in a strict monotheism, necessarily implies its unity, order, and continuity in a system.

The narrative also declares the efficiency of second causes. The sun, the moon, and the stars are real agents giving light to the earth; the earth brings forth grass; the herb yields seed after its kind, and the trees bear fruit wherein is the seed thereof after its kind. So throughout the Bible created beings are recognized as real beings exerting efficiency, on which as objects and through which as agents God acts. This shuts out pantheism, which allows no real being or efficiency to the finite. It shuts out polytheism, banishing the divinities from the trees, the mountains, the rivers, and all the powers of nature. Nor is it derogatory to God, nor incompatible with his almightiness, that he is immanent in the universe which he has created, and acts on and through it according to the laws of his own reason and in the invariable sequences of nature which those laws determine.

The cosmogony of Genesis also represents the universe as progressively developed. It was not created and completed by a

single fiat of the divine will. Six epochs are mentioned in its progressive evolution. God is also recognized as immanent in it, developing at the successive epochs a more diversified arrangement of the material and higher types of being. At last, when the earth has become fit for human habitation, he brings man into being.

This cosmogony is singularly free from mythical and puerile conceptions like those common among the ancient nations. Here is no trace of the sun-myth in any of its many forms; no teaching that the world rests on a tortoise; or that it floats in a sea of milk; or that, like the primitive shelter of the lowest savages, consisting of the branches of a tree pulled down and fastened to the ground, it is built around and supported by a tree, from which the Scandinavian conception of the tree Yggdrasil probably originated; or that the sun laboriously forces his way every night by difficult and intricate passages through the foundation of the earth; nor does it mention a river of fire winding about the earth, of which, with several other equally mythical conceptions, Plato tells us in the "Phaedo."

While the account of the creation was not intended to teach science, it does present a remarkable agreement with modern science. Its recognition of the progressive development of the universe has been already noticed. Its declaration that light existed before the sun, which used to be urged as proof of its contradiction of science, is now a remarkable instance of its agreement with it. When the deep was waste and void and in darkness, the spirit of God moved upon its face. This naturally indicates the beginning of motion, which must have been first in the development of the matter of the universe, in whatever form it first existed. And the beginning of motion may have been the molecular vibration of the all-pervading ether which causes light. And thus light would be the first thing produced in the distribution and arrangement of the material of the universe. "Firmament" in English, like the Latin word from which it is derived, means something firm and stable. The same is the meaning of the Greek word by which it is translated in the Septuagint. But the Hebrew word translated "firmament" means simply an expanse. Various other agreements have been pointed out by skilled scientists. The following, from Professor Haeckel, of Jena, is in striking contrast with the flippancy with which many, inferior to him in scientific ability, have ridiculed the account of creation in Genesis:

"Two great and fundamental ideas, common also to the non-miraculous theory of creation, meet us in this Mosaic hypothesis of creation with surprising clearness and simplicity, — the idea of separation or differentiation, and the idea of progressive development or perfecting. Although Moses looks on the results of the great law of organic development . . . as the direct action of a constructing creator, yet in his theory there lies hidden the ruling idea of a differentiation and progressive development of the originally simple matter. We can therefore bestow our just and sincere admiration on the Jewish lawgiver's grand insight into nature and his simple and natural hypothesis of creation, without discovering in it a so-called divine revelation." [1] How, then, is it to be accounted for that in an antiquity so remote these far-sighted suggestions are found in this document?

2. Here also great truths are revealed respecting God. No sentence ever written or spoken in human language declares truths more fundamental and momentous than the first sentence of Genesis. To the fundamental truth here revealed all physical science, all speculative, ethical, and æsthetic philosophy, all science of government and law, and all religion must go back for their ultimate foundation, for their possibility and their right to be. For if the universe, with all its beings, forces, truths, and laws, is not the product of power guided by rational intelligence for the realization of rational ends, if it is not ultimately grounded in reason, then there is no ultimate foundation for the reality of human knowledge, the obligation of virtue, or the possibility of religion. That which is revealed in this sentence is, The one only living and true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth. It is worthy to be the first sentence in the record of God's revelation of himself. The first words, "In the beginning God," present him as antecedent to the universe. The next words, "created the heavens and the earth," declare that he is not merely the antecedent, but is also the intelligent, originating, creative power, who gives being to the universe. Here is declared the creation of the material of the universe. The succeeding verses declare the progressive distribution, arrangement, and development of the original material through the brooding energy of God's spirit, and the bringing in, at successive epochs, of vegetable, animal, and rational life.

[1] History of Creation, Trans. vol. i. p. 38.

These opening chapters of Genesis clearly and distinctly teach monotheism. In them God is revealed as distinct from the universe and its creator, transcending it, yet immanent and active in it. He is revealed as the personal God. His whole action as here set forth is in self-consciousness, and in rational intelligence and freedom. He creates by his own free will, and each successive act reveals the progressive realization of a rational plan. He creates and develops the universe by the immediate volition of his will. God said, "Let light be and light was." God's resting on the seventh day reveals at least that he is not acting under necessity, but acts in the finite, or refrains from acting, as he will. He is also revealed as the one God. He is one. The Hebrew word here translated God is in form plural, but the verbs of which it is the subject are singular. This use of the plural (Elohim) to denote the one only God prevails throughout the Old Testament. It is used even in the explicit assertion of the oneness of God: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah" (Deut. vi. 4). No valid argument against the oneness of God can be founded on this use of the plural name of God, for it is a well-known peculiarity of the Hebrew language. Gesenius says that this name of God is used in the singular form only in the poetic style and the later Hebrew. And the whole narrative shows that it denotes here the one God. As the polytheists in their inscriptions had used the word in the plural, this writer uses the word in the same form and treats it as singular, teaching what they had worshiped as many is in reality one God. And he is here revealed as the only God and the God over all. He was in the beginning, alone, the only God. All besides him is created and dependent being; it is not God. This excludes every form of polytheism. God is sharply distinguished from the universe. He is not evolved into the universe and identified with it. He is its creator. As creator he is distinct from the universe and transcends it. This excludes every form of pantheism. Yet God is also revealed as immanent in the universe and energizing in its progressive evolution through successive epochs in time. This excludes Epicurean and deistic conceptions of God as a mere first cause excluded from the universe. Thus in the opening of Genesis is recognized the harmony of the seeming antinomies in the conception of God, of the diversity of his attributes and the variety of their manifestations with the

unity of his being, of his transcendence of the universe with his immanent action in it. The study of these antinomies has occupied the profoundest thought of man in all ages, and aside from the biblical revelation has issued in one-sided conceptions, in polytheism, or in Epicureanism or deism, or in pantheism.

We find also in these chapters of Genesis a revelation of the moral government of God. The sixth and highest epoch is the creation of man "in the image of God." Here is the revelation of God's providential care both for man and beast in providing for their needs. But the narrative plainly shows that rational man as a subject of moral government is the chief object of interest. To him God gives dominion over the earth, to subdue and cultivate it and to possess and use its powers and resources. In all the successive steps in the development of the material of the world, the ruling design evidently was to prepare it for the habitation of man. For this even the sun and moon were made. Whatever other ends they subserve, the narrative says they were made "to give light upon the earth." Thus the representation is that the whole action of God in creating and developing the physical system was subordinated to the higher ends of the moral system in which man appears under the moral government of God. Accordingly man is at once recognized as a responsible free agent, is put on probation under moral law and government and subjected to a course of moral discipline and education. God cares for him with paternal love and admits him to free communion with himself.

It is said repeatedly at the successive epochs, "and God saw that it was good"; and at the completion of the work it is said, "and God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good." Here God is pictured as rejoicing in his work. This excludes all pessimistic conceptions of the universe, and all Zoroastrian and Manichæan ideas of an evil being co-eternal with God. It is common to praise the ancient Greeks for their bright and sunny lives. Here in the beginning of Genesis we find God himself taking a bright and sunny view of the universe and rejoicing in it as very good. What a contrast to Buddhism, the fundamental principle of which is that all finite existence is in itself an evil and the only redemption of finite beings is in the cessation of their conscious individual existence.

It is objected that God does not here declare the law of love

nor a code of moral precepts, nor make a full revelation of his own character as love. The answer is that every finite person must begin without moral development, and must develop his moral capacities and form his moral character by his own free action. In no other way are moral development and the formation of moral character possible or even conceivable. And for the undeveloped person, whether an infant or a savage, moral education and development must begin with specific rules requiring or forbidding specific acts. Therefore the method of dealing with the first man and woman, as here pictured, is accordant with the principles of true ethical philosophy, and with all experience in moral education and development. And the narrative shows that God from the beginning did show his love for the first pair and his kindly care for them. And we shall see that afterwards, when they had sinned, God did make a grand revelation to them of his redeeming love.

The truth respecting God recognized in these three opening chapters of Genesis is the more surprising when contrasted with the religions of all the peoples surrounding the Hebrews in their earlier history. The gods of these peoples were themselves objects and powers of nature. But here in Genesis it is revealed that not only the trees and animals which some of them worshiped, but the stars, the moon, and even the sun, the highest object of nature-worship, were themselves created by the one true God and were dependent on him, — that he is the God who is above all the powers of the universe and on whom they all depend for their existence. Accordingly we find a wonderful contrast in this respect between the account of the creation in the ancient inscriptions, so far as they have been deciphered, and the record of the creation in Genesis. In the former the earth and heavens are represented as generated from the great deep, and the first beings thus generated are the gods themselves.[1] No

[1] "At that time, above, the heaven was unnamed; below, the earth by name was unrecorded; the boundless deep also (was) their generator. The chaos of the sea was she who bore the whole of them. Their waters were collected together in one place, and the flowering reed was not gathered, the marsh-plant was not grown. At that time the gods had not been produced, any one of them; by name they had not been called, destiny was not fixed. The (great) gods also were made; the gods Lakhmu and Lakhamu were produced (the first), the gods Sar and Kisar were made next. The days were long: a long (time passed), (and) the gods Anu,

creation of the universe by a God antecedent and superior to it is recognized; but the material of the universe is first, and the gods, as mere powers of nature, are generated from it. The same contrast appears between the narratives of the first ten chapters of Genesis and their heathen counterparts. In the latter are found only nature-gods. In the former are found only the most distinct monotheistic conceptions of God like those in the first three chapters.[1]

The true and sublime idea of God in the beginning of Genesis is the more surprising in view of the fact that during the many ages from the time when this was written to the coming of the Christ, in the most civilized nations as well as the uncivilized, the Hebrews alone excepted, the mass of the people had not attained the conception of the one personal God here so distinctly presented. Polytheism prevailed in all the nations. Even the more profound thinkers, who attained the idea of the one personal God, thought it an idea difficult to be attained and not to be communicated to the common people, and therefore held it occult in their "mysteries," or they regarded him as too great and pure to soil himself by intermeddling with earthly affairs. To the question how this conception of God in these first three chapters of Genesis is to be accounted for, the only reasonable answer is, that God imparted it by his revelation of himself. And the earlier the date assigned to the composition, the more decisive is the internal evidence that it is the revelation of God.

It is said by superficial critics that God is represented here as a man going in and out and conversing with Adam and Eve, and that this indicates a very low conception of God, belonging to a very low type of paganism and to a barbarous people. To this it may be replied that these chapters do not ascribe a human form to God, and do not inform us precisely in what way God made himself known. If the narrative implies that it was in a human form, this may be accounted for as belonging to the old type of representation which the writer has purposely chosen in order to convey the truth respecting God in sharp contrast with

(Bel and Hea were born of) the gods Sar and Kisar." ("Chaldean Account of Genesis," by George Smith, revised and corrected by A. H. Sayce, pp. 57, 58.)

[1] Lenormant, "Beginnings of History," trans. pp. 337–342.

the heathen representations. But, whatever the form in which God is here represented as revealing himself, the grand ideas of God and of his relations to man here presented remove this narrative far away from all heathen conceptions, and make it impossible to regard it as the product of the thought and religion of a barbarous and idolatrous people. And the same may be said of all theophanies of the Old Testament. The Old Testament assumes throughout that God is making special revelations of himself to man. These revelations are represented as being made through a great variety of theophanies, all of which are rich in spiritual significance. Whatever explanation may be given of the forms in which the revelation is made, the revelation of God actually made in them is worthy of God and vindicates its claim to be a true revelation of him.

3. These three chapters disclose fundamental facts and truths respecting man.

Here the great truth is clearly indicated that the essential elements of personality are the same in man and in God. Man was created in the image of God. And not only is this phrase significant, but the man and the woman are represented and treated throughout the whole history as rational, personal free agents, responsible for their actions under God's moral government and discipline, and admitted to intimacy with him. Many Christian theologians have held theories of free will which logically imply and sometimes explicitly assert that God is not a free agent. Mohammedism presents a view of God which logically involves the denial of free will in man and reduces God practically to a blind fate. But the whole narrative in this ancient document in Genesis rests on the assumption that God and man are alike personal free agents, that the essential elements of rational free personality are the same in both. Man as thus constituted is represented as a supernatural being. He is above nature. This is recognized by God in giving him lordship over nature (Gen. i. 26, 28). God appoints the man to have dominion over all the earth and over every living thing upon it. The heathen regarded the gods themselves as included in nature and generated by it. But in Genesis not only is God in the beginning the creator and above nature, but man himself, though a creature of God, is like God in his rational free personality, and thus is supernatural, above nature and having lordship over it. And this implies, as

we have already seen, that the earth and all in it, the sun, moon, and stars, the whole physical system, exist for the moral system and are subordinate to its uses and to the realization of its moral and spiritual ideals and ends.

Man is also represented as knowing God and communing with him. He is under God's law and government; thus he is on probation and in such a way as is compatible with his undeveloped capacities and character. He is by his own action to form his own character and to determine his own destiny.

Here also is the recognition of marriage as the union of one man with one woman, and of the perpetuity and inviolability of the marriage relation. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. ii. 23, 24).

Here also is the recognition of the fact of sin; a fact which has been demonstrating its actuality every year and day and hour in the history of man ever since the first sin was committed. It is like Niagara in its fulness, its power, and its continuance. At the Falls one is awed by its continuity and, as it were, its omnipresence; wherever you are, in every waking hour of day and night you hear its roar and are conscious of its presence and power. It overpowers the mind with awe to think of that tremendous torrent pouring down in all its fulness every moment, unexhausted through all the years and all the centuries. Like that is the torrent of human sin. Look into the history of man in whatever age or country, and you find sin pouring through it with appalling power. We hear its roar, nearer or more distant, in the news of every morning. There can be no true philosophy of human history which fails to recognize this fundamental fact. This we find recognized in the opening of Genesis; and the recognition of it is essential to any correct understanding of the history of man and of the action of God revealing himself in human history.

In this narrative also the essential characteristics of all sin are disclosed. Sin is supreme selfishness in its several forms of self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying. These essential characteristics of sin are exhibited here. The temptation was not addressed, as commonly supposed, to the appetites and lower propensities of the man and the woman, enticing to a life

of sensual indulgence. It was explicitly addressed to their higher and nobler impulses, promising them the immediate realization of their highest development and greatness, if they would disobey God and take the forbidden fruit. "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." The tempter here presents a legitimate object of human aspiration. Man in his rational free personality is "in the image of God." He legitimately aspires to the increase of knowledge, to the development of all his powers, and to the attainment of likeness to God in moral character, that is, in universal love. The same promise, "Ye shall be as God," is renewed in the gospel on the authority of Christ. God in the life and work of Christ reveals man's likeness to God in his constitution as a personal being, and opens to him the way in which, after he has sinned, he may be restored to his normal condition of union with God by faith, may be accepted as a child of God and renovated in character into the likeness of God in love. "He hath granted unto us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). This is the old promise "Ye shall be as God," given anew by God himself. The deception by which the tempter misled man at the outset was as to what the promised greatness of being as God really consists in and as to the methods by which it must be attained. His promise implied that all which hindered their attaining the highest knowledge, power, and development was their subjection to God. He insinuates that God is jealous of them and knows that, if they break away from their subjection to him, they will be his equals, and he will be unable to control them any longer. He suggests to them, If you eat this forbidden fruit, you will then not need to depend on God for directions what to do and for rules for the wise conduct of your lives; you will know of yourselves what is good for you and what is evil, and can determine for yourselves, independently of God's commands, what desires it is best for you to gratify. He urges them, therefore, to disobey God, to declare themselves independent of him; to set themselves up in self-sufficiency, no longer trusting in God as dependent on him; in self-will, disregarding his law; in self-seeking, becoming great by grasping for themselves and indulging themselves as they please in the gratification of their desires.

And he assures them that in so doing God will be unable to punish them, and that they will realize the highest possibilities of their being, becoming equal with God. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." Here, in yielding to the temptation, she beguiles herself with an enticement which the tempter had not mentioned. She seems to say to herself, If I set up for myself in independence of God, I shall not only get for myself the highest knowledge and power, but I shall at the same time be gratifying my natural desire for agreeable food, and shall delight my eyes with beauty, and so I shall achieve greatness in the way of self-gratification and self-indulgence. And she may have reasoned, as sinners still continue to reason, "Why should I not follow my nature? Why am I made with these appetites and desires, if not to gratify them?"

Here, therefore, in this original transgression we see the essential elements of all sinful character. It is acting in accordance with the primeval lie of the serpent. It is setting one's self up in self-sufficiency, renouncing dependence on God instead of trusting him; in self-will, making one's own will his law, and renouncing allegiance to God and obedience to his law; in self-seeking, endeavoring in all the activity of life to gain the highest power and good by grasping and getting for self, by indulging self in the gratification of desire, instead of loving God with all the heart and one's neighbor as himself. The tempter taught man in the outset this tremendous lie, that the way for him to become great and powerful and to attain the highest good is by superior force to crush the weaker when in his way and seize his possessions, or to overpower him and compel his service. Here, then, sin is presented in its essence as supreme selfishness, manifesting itself in the outset, as it has always manifested itself, in self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying. As such, it is wilful alienation from God. Therefore the sinner misses all true development, productiveness, and well-being as inevitably as the vine-branch becomes fruitless and withers when torn from the vine.

Sin is not represented here as beginning in sensual indulgence. But these appetites and passions are among the most obtrusive of the natural propensities. Therefore when a person has re-

nounced God and his spiritual relations and opportunities, and sets out to live for the gratification of his own desires, it is not surprising that he so often falls into a sensual life. Then, instead of realizing independence, freedom, and power, he finds himself a slave to appetite and passion and in bondage to earthly and sensual desires. James traces the pedigree of sin back to desire, which is the generic meaning of the word there translated lust (James i. 14, 15). This accords with the account of the origin of sin in Eden. Eve saw that the apple was to be desired. Desire entices to action but is not in itself necessarily sinful. If the will determines selfishly to gratify the desire reckless of God's law and of the rights which it guarantees to men, then the desire is fertilized, the seed which it bears is sin, and, when it has ripened, is death.

Here also begins the revelation of God as the redeemer of man from sin. God's redemptive action began as soon as man had sinned. It began in gracious divine action and influence to reclaim the sinners to their normal allegiance to himself. After Adam and Eve had sinned, God is represented as immediately seeking them, while they ran away from him. And when they stood before him, he condemned them indeed and banished them from Eden. But he did not banish them from himself. On the contrary, as the subsequent narrative shows, he received them and those of their children and children's children who willingly trusted and served him as accepted worshipers. And here is recorded not only the beginning of God's gracious action toward these first of human sinners, but also the promise of its continuance and its prevailing power. This promise is the so-called Protevangelium, in which God says to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." We learn from the Babylonian inscriptions that the serpent was recognized as representing the power of lawlessness and evil among all the Semitic peoples.[1] He would, therefore, be

[1] "The goddess Nina ceased to retain her serpentine attributes and after the era of the monuments of Tel-loh passed almost entirely out of memory; while the serpent became, what indeed he always seems to have been in genuine Semitic belief, the incarnation of wickedness and guile. We read, in the bilingual lists, of the evil serpent, the serpent of darkness, and it is probable that the imagination of later time confounded this serpent of dark-

at once recognized as such by all readers and hearers of Genesis as soon as it was written. Therefore those for whom the story of the temptation was written must at once have understood it to declare that, under temptation by the power of lawlessness and evil, man had disobeyed God and fallen under the divine condemnation as a sinner. And it reveals, and must have been understood as revealing, the beginning of a conflict between the powers of good and of evil, which was to be continued through the history of man; and it reveals, and must have been understood to reveal God's promise of victory over the power of evil which God was to win for man in some way through the seed of the woman. This narrative shows that God's action in redeeming man from sin began as soon as man had sinned and that it was to be continued to a victorious issue.

Thus in the opening of Genesis is struck the keynote of human history, in the declaration of the two great facts of sin and redemption. Here is recorded the beginning of the conflict of God's grace with the powers of darkness in the redemption of man from sin. Here also is the prediction that this conflict was to continue as the staple of human history; and here is the promise of victory through the seed of the woman. And history shows that the conflict was continued with increasing distinctness of significance until Christ came and the Spirit of God was poured out on all flesh.

Less than half a century before Christ came, Julius Cæsar crossed the Rubicon and laid the foundation of the imperial power of the Cæsars who followed in long succession. Christ was born in the life-time of the first Roman emperor. The coming of the Christ and the coming of the Cæsar so nearly at the same time signalize the great epoch in the progress of this conflict and the fulfilment of this promise. Rome, in the spirit of selfish aggression, had subjugated the whole western world. The Roman emperor is the fit representative in history of the power of self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying, — of that

ness with the dragon Tiamat, the leader of the powers of night and chaos." (A. H. Sayce, "The Religion of the Ancient Babylonians," Hibbert Lectures, 1887, p. 223.)

Among the Aryan peoples of Persia and India the serpent was in like manner the symbol of the power of evil. (Pressensé, "Christianity and the Ancient World," pp. 132, 133.)

supremely selfish spirit of grasping, conquest, and domination which is the essence of all sin. Paul describes sin, when in its culmination it reveals in bold relief its essential character: "The man of sin, the son of perdition; he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4). It was the Roman emperor, claiming worship as a god, whom Paul had in mind when he drew this terrible picture of the antichrist, "the man of sin." John also presents the Roman emperor as the antichrist (Rev. xiii. 11–18). It is a fit presentation, for the antichrist is the embodiment of the spirit of selfish aggressiveness asserting itself in subjugating men by force and in opposition to the reign of self-renouncing love in the process of realization in the kingdom of Christ. It was the Cæsar who not very long after Christ's crucifixion began to wield all the power of the Roman empire to crush the Christian church. Any Christian might have escaped martyrdom by sprinkling a few grains of incense in acknowledgment of the Cæsar as a god. Christ was a subject of the Cæsar. To human view how weak, how utterly insignificant he was in comparison with the emperor of the civilized world. But the Cæsar represented selfish power maintaining, extending, and aggrandizing itself by force. Christ represented the power of love acting in harmony with the eternal truth and law of God and realizing the ends of God's eternal wisdom and love. He revealed and maintained the supreme, universal, and inviolable authority and the immutable obligation of the divine law of love. In the strength of that love and that law he confronted the world-ruling power of selfish and forceful conquest, subjugation, and domination in self-aggrandizement. The empire of the Cæsars crumbled and vanished from the earth. The kingdom of Christ under the reign of love, beginning as a grain of mustard seed, prevailed, and is transforming the world. And the scriptures foretell that it will go on transforming human society into the kingdom of God till the end and consummation of the earthly history of man. Here in the beginning of this first book of the Bible, significantly named Genesis, is disclosed the beginning of the great conflict between the good and the evil, between love and selfishness, between the divine and the satanic, which has marked the whole history of man. There can be no true philosophy of human history which fails to recognize both man's

sin and God's continuous action among men redeeming them from sin and establishing and advancing his kingdom of righteousness and good-will among men on the earth. The establishment and triumph of this kingdom is the goal of all God's action on earth and the highest end which can be realized in the history of man.

Accordingly, the biblical history, which begins with Paradise lost by the sin of man, ends in the glorious vision of Paradise regained by man through Christ, in which the categoric imperative of the law is transcended and perfectly obeyed in Christian character fully developed and acting in the spontaneity of perfect love. Thus the promise "Ye shall be as God" — by seeking the fulfilment of which in selfishness man brought on himself ruin in sin and alienation from God — is renewed in Christ and fulfilled through the renewing of sinners by the Holy Spirit into the life of love. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Thus in the first three chapters of Genesis we find the beginnings of God's revelation of himself in his relation to the universe and to man in all the aspects in which he afterwards revealed himself more fully down to the coming of the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And the revelation of these great truths or realities respecting nature, God, and man, remains indisputable in this ancient document, whatever theory may be adopted as to the form of it, whether from the point of view of literary criticism or of physical science.

III. Speculative Objections. — It remains to notice briefly some questions and difficulties which have arisen in speculative thought on the creation.

1. To give real being to the finite by creation would be incompatible with the absoluteness of God. Rothe says God cannot think of another being as not-God, because if not-God it would be the absolute and contradictory antithesis of God.[1] This objection can be valid only against the supposition that God

[1] Theologische Ethik, vol. i. p. 156.

gives to the creature self-existent and independent being; that is, creates another God. But this absurdity no one holds. As an objection against the possibility of creating finite beings always dependent on God, it can be valid only on some erroneous idea of the absolute as a mathematical total of all things or as the logical universal. It is of no force against the true conception of God as the absolute Being. What is not myself is not a contradiction of the existence of myself, it is the object of my thought and action. So the real being of what is not God is in no contradictory antithesis to God, for it is created by him and ever dependent on him. God is not limited nor his attributes contradicted by imparting real being to his creatures; he is revealed. If God could not create that which is not God in the finite forms of space and time he would be limited and his attributes contradicted by that very lack of power. He would be limited by space and time because he would be shut out from exerting his power in them. The objection, if valid, plunges us into the abyss of pantheism. God is the unconscious and the impersonal, eternally rolling in necessity in and upon itself. There would be no beings on whom he could act, to whom he could reveal himself; there would be no personal free agents, no moral system, no distinction of right and wrong, no kingdom of God advancing on the earth.

2. It is objected that, since nothing comes of nothing, God cannot create out of nothing. Therefore the matter of the universe must be eternal.

But if matter has existed eternally, as something other than God, it is independent of God and necessarily limits and conditions him.

And if the existence of God is acknowledged, the maxim "Nothing comes of nothing" has no legitimate application to prove the eternal existence of matter. For in that case the universe does not come from nothing, but from God. The maxim means no more than that every beginning or change must have a cause. Nothing cannot produce something. The maxim is fully satisfied when God is recognized as the cause. Before he calls the universe into being it has no existence as a finite universe. But the thought which is realized in it and the power which realizes it are eternal in God. It is not thought alone; for then the universe would be merely ideal. It is not power alone; for then

the universe would be a chaos without intelligence, unregulated by law and incapable of being apprehended in science. This is a sufficient answer to the objection. It is needless as well as useless to attempt to define more exactly how God creates or what are the resources within himself which he uses. Two examples of such attempts may be briefly noticed.

Schelling and others have insisted that there is a nature in God which becomes the basis of the matter of the universe. Some speak even of a corporeity in him. They say that something which is not God must be posited in God, and thus they would find the material for the universe. They seem to have in view some analogy to the human body. The body is not of the essence of the human ego or person, and yet it is a part of the man and is animated by the soul. This leads at once to that form of pantheism which regards God as the soul of the universe. And if this is disclaimed, the phrase "nature in God" is used without intelligible meaning, and is a mere bridge of words.

Others have tried to explain God's creative action as a self-limitation of God. This idea appears in Hindu philosophy. God is supposed to limit himself in the act of creating and therein to show his self-sacrificing love. The dynamic conception of nature may give some support to this suggestion. It supposes the essence of matter to be forces in equilibrium and thus holding possession of a definite form in space so that no other force can penetrate it. Thus matter may be divine force localized. And because God is infinite, no positing of any portion of his force within limits in space would make the absolute amount of force greater, and no recalling it and so annihilating the finite thing in which it had been posited, would make the total amount any less. This theory, however, would not be an adequate explanation of the existence of rational, personal beings, for they are more and other than force occupying space. Possibly the creation of a finite personal spirit may be explained in an analogous way, as a portion of mind-force limited in a distinct individual consciousness and in a definite place and time. But such speculations are unnecessary to answer the objection. It is sufficient to know that God has in himself all the resources and powers adequate to create without further defining how he does it. And such speculations are fruitless. A finite being can

never pass beyond the line of his finiteness so as to see and delineate how it is that the absolute God realizes his thought in the finite and thus reveals himself.

3. A speculative question sometimes asked is, What was God doing before he created the world? "Will you be satisfied," says the agnostic, "with the puerile thought that God woke up one day after the inaction of eternity, and bethought himself that he would make some worlds?"

This is one of those questions which demand exact definitions of what lies beyond the limits of the finite and beyond the limits of all finite minds. It carries us beyond all God's revelations of himself and calls on us to define, by the mere force of our unaided intellects, the precise mode of his eternal action of which he has made no revelation. Our inability to answer such a question does not invalidate the fact that God does reveal himself in the finite in the forms of space and time, nor the reality of our positive knowledge of him through these revelations.

The universe in its existence and ongoing is a true revelation of God in which we know what he eternally is. If we try to picture God's thought or intelligence as eternal, we can think it only as one archetypal, all-comprehending knowledge. If we try to think of God's action as eternal, we can think it only as one all-comprehending and unchanging purpose. But the eternal and archetypal thought and the eternal and all-comprehending purpose are in the process of being progressively realized and revealed in the universe and in God's action in it in time. Plato says Time is the moving image of eternity. God's action in the universe in time is the evolving image, the progressive realization and revelation of God's thought and purpose, of his action in eternity.

However time differs from eternity, it reveals it. A human person stands unchanging in his personal identity, yet reveals himself continuously in the successive and changing activity of thought and will. This consciousness of unchanging personal identity is the fixed standard by which he is able to note and measure the succession of events and the lapse of time. If he floated with everything else in the current he would know neither his identity nor his motion. And God is unchanging in his eternal identity, yet ever revealing himself by his action in time.

Because man is finite, he knows but in part, and successive events are known to him only as they occur. A man possesses only the present. But what is the present? An infinitesimal moment which departs in coming; the unknown future always crystallizing into the past. But God's consciousness is not limited. To him successive events are not known merely in their occurrence, but the past, the present, and the future are equally clear in his knowledge. His knowledge is also an eternal fulness which has neither ebb nor flow. But this does not deny the reality of succession and time. The absolute does not annul the finite, it gives it being. Almightiness does not annihilate finite power; it is the source of the reality of it. So eternity does not annul time, it is the basis of its reality. On the other hand, finite power is not contradictory to almightiness but reveals it. And time is not contradictory to eternity but reveals it. Man, the finite image of God, stands unchanged in his personal identity in all his varied activity and through the succession of events. Much more may God abide unchanged in his eternal personal identity, and yet reveal himself in the finite through his action in time. Time, therefore, is not contradictory to eternity, but it is its image, type, or revelation. Creation is the expression and revelation of the divine power, wisdom, and love in the finite. Time is the expression or revelation or exponent of God's eternity in the finite.

It follows that time is inseparable from created or finite existence. When finite beings were created time began. Should all finite beings be annihilated and God exist alone, he would be in eternity, and time would cease. For time is eternity measured by the succession of events in the finite universe, and eternity is time not thus measured. The creative action was "in the beginning," — that is, time itself, as measured by the succession of events, began with the creation. Hence the act of creation, in which time itself begins, must transcend all time, and cannot be at any definite moment in time.

The objection is, therefore, of no force. The very asking of the question implies an absurdity. For to say that an infinite time must have elapsed before the creation, is to say that before creation the creation itself must have existed an infinite time. Augustine said: "As they demand why the world was created then and no sooner; we may ask why it was created just here where it

is and not elsewhere." And when the question was asked, "What was God doing before he created the world?" he rebuked one who answered, "He was preparing hell for those who pry into mysteries." [1] But Luther answered this question humorously: "He was cutting twigs in the wilderness to chastise those who ask impertinent questions." These answers were intended to indicate that it is an illegitimate question.

The objection under consideration is of force mainly against a false conception of the universe as a machine completed by a single fiat of will in the creation, and of God as so transcending it as to be in fact separated from it and capable of acting on it only by isolated miraculous acts in violation of its laws. It is of no force against true theism, which regards God as the absolute Reason, always immanent in the universe and developing it, and the universe as plastic in his hand. Thus he is continuously expressing his thought and love in it, as the spirit of man pervades his body, and is continuously expressing in and through it his thought, and will, and feeling. Innumerable worlds and systems have been brought into being, which exist now in different stages of their development, or in the past have completed their evolution, accomplished the ends for which they were made, and have been resolved again into the original nebulous matter to be developed anew. Referring to this, Professor Tayler Lewis says of various biblical expressions of measureless past duration: "Is there not something of this sort, laboring, as it were, for utterance, in many parts of the Bible, and especially in the remarkable reduplicates of them which we have been considering? Is it easy to avoid the thought that in these swelling climaxes of *ages*, and *ages of ages*, ever ascending upward toward the infinite, the writers were travailing with an idea, which, though not definitely clear, and not definitely filled up with either a real or a mythical history, did, nevertheless, represent to their minds actual ante-terrene and ante-Adamic periods, occupied in some way with God's works, both spiritual and natural? Can we believe that such language could have come from the conception of a blank duration like the metaphysical notion of time, or of solitary ages of the divine existence, or still less that such a barren idea could ever have given rise to such terms of division and plurality?" [2] According

[1] Civitas Dei, Bk. xi. chap. 5; Confessions, Bk. xi. § xii.

[2] The Six Days of Creation, pp. 383, 384.

to this view, there is no need of fixing in imagination a beginning of the universe at a definite point in time. To whatever distance in time imagination traces back the universe, it always finds God antecedent to it as its cause, and the universe always dependent on him for its being. And all which is practically essential in the idea of creation is given in the conception of God as always antecedent to the universe as its cause and supporting it in being, as immanent and energizing in it and revealing himself through it, and of the universe as always dependent on God for its being, and always revealing his presence and power, his wisdom and his love.

This conception of the universe as created by God and always dependent on him, has been illustrated in various ways. The Platonists used the illustration of a foot making an imprint in the sand. Through whatever length of time the foot continued its pressure, it would always be the cause of the footprint. President Edwards illustrated it from the colors of a portrait, which are continuously created by the sunlight. It has been illustrated from light itself. Though the sun has been emitting light for millions of years, it is continuously the cause of the light, and as its cause is its antecedent. But they mistake who mean by such illustrations that the original matter of the universe is as eternal as God. For the universe still remains an effect, and is distinct from God and dependent on him. Thus God is always the *prius* of the universe, its cause and creator.

Cousin supposes that God necessarily creates eternally. But in saying this he sinks into the pantheism of Spinoza. When free will is excluded from God, he is at once identified with the unconscious and impersonal substance of the universe necessarily evolving into all that is. And his conception is only a vain attempt to picture the eternal in the finite forms of time.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD'S CHIEF END IN CREATION

In considering the attributes of God, it was shown that he is not impelled to act by any want, but by pure, disinterested love. He acts, not to get, but to give; not to supply his need, but to pour out of his overflowing fulness in blessing.

All rational action is for some rational end. The question now arises, What is the rational end which God proposes to accomplish by the action of his love in creating, developing, and governing the universe? What is the rational end to which all other ends are subordinate, and in subordination to which all his action is seen to be in unity and harmony?

The Bible teaches that all God's action is in love in its two aspects of righteousness and benevolence. But this is not incompatible with declaring also the rational end to be accomplished by the action of his love. For his love must not act blindly as a mere good nature or amiable instinctive impulse, but he must determine in the light of reason to what end to direct his action, in order to realize the full and complete expression and satisfaction of his love in both its aspects.

I. The Biblical Statement. — The Bible states the doctrine of God's chief end in three principal forms.

God is himself the end for whom all things are created. "Of him and through him and unto him are all things." "For whom are all things and by whom are all things." "For mine own sake will I do it."[1]

God does all things for his own name's sake. "The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake." "He leadeth

[1] Rom. xi. 36; Heb. ii. 10; Isaiah xlviii. 11.

me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." This is a common form of expression throughout the Old Testament. God rescues Israel from Egypt, restores them from Babylon, executes judgment on the wicked, forgives the penitent, leads those who trust him in the way of life, does divine works of every kind "for his name's sake." This phrase is used in a similar way in the New Testament. "Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake." "Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."[1] It is remarkable that in the New Testament this phrase is usually, if not always, applied to Jesus Christ. This it declares to be the name that is above every name, and in which every knee should bow. This application to him of a phrase so commonly applied in the Old Testament to Jehovah in distinct assertion of his absolute supremacy, is a striking recognition of the God in Christ.

A third form of biblical statement occasionally found is that God acts for his own glory. "Whom I have created for my glory." "The heavens declare the glory of God." "The fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[2]

These three biblical forms of statement have essentially the same meaning. The Jews called God's attributes names of God. It is common in the Old Testament that when God makes any special revelation of himself, he gives himself a new name significant of what had been revealed. When written records were not in every one's hands as now, God committed the significance of a revelation to a peculiar name of himself in order to perpetuate and extend the knowledge of it. This name floated out among the people and down through the changes and convulsions of time, bearing from generation to generation its precious contents, a revelation of God. For example, at the burning bush God gave to the name Jehovah a new meaning as the memorial name of the covenant God of Israel. The English translation of the Bible and its revisers, by substituting the general name Lord, which is not in the text, for the specific name Jehovah in most of the passages where it occurs in the Old Testament, have blotted out this sig-

[1] 1 Sam. xii. 22; Psalm xxiii. 3; Rom. i. 5; 1 John ii. 12.
[2] Isaiah xliii. 7; Psalm xix. 1; Phil. i. 11 and ii. 11.

nificance, and so have dropped out of God's Word one of the most significant and important of God's revelations of himself in the Old Testament. Many other instances of names of God, significant of his perfections and his relations to men, are familiar, and need not be mentioned. In this way, the names of God became identified with his perfections as revealed to men, and the phrase "name of God" came to denote his Godhood or Deity, and sometimes God himself, especially as the object of worship. "How excellent is thy name in all the earth;" "Save me by thy name;" "Thy name is near." Of the angel of the covenant he says, "My name is in him." And of the temple he said, "My name shall be there: to hearken to the prayer which thy servant shall pray." And Isaiah says, "Behold the name of Jehovah cometh from far, burning with his anger and in thick rising smoke."[1] And the whole of the divine perfections is called the glory of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God;" "His glory is above the earth and heaven;" "Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father."[2]

Thus the name of God and the glory of God denote his essential perfections or his Godhood, and sometimes are a periphrasis for God himself. The biblical teachings imply that God's end in creation and in all his action is within himself. He acts out the Godhood that is him. King Lear was "every inch a king." All which he did was the spontaneous expression in action of the conscious kingliness within him. So in every act of creation, providence, moral government, and redemption, God expresses the conscious Godhood that is in him. He simply acts out the God. But God is love. If, then, he acts out the God, he will act out his love. Moved by his free, eternal love, his end in creating the universe and energizing in it, is to realize in it all the perfection and good which his infinite power, using all the resources of his perfect wisdom in acts of love, can realize in a finite universe. And by his continuous action in it he is progressively realizing this end; the universe is developed to higher and higher forms, the spiritual system is brought in above the physical yet in it, personal beings are spiritually quickened and developed into the

[1] Psalm viii. 1; liv. 1; lxxv. 1; Exod. xxiii. 21; 1 Kings viii. 29; Isaiah xxx. 27.

[2] Psalm xix. 1; clxviii. 13; Rom. vi. 4.

likeness of God, and the universe becomes more and more the exponent of all the riches of God's power, wisdom, and love. God is ever energizing in it, in nature and in the spiritual system, in Christ and his kingdom, in innumerable rational beings who, in all ages and in numberless worlds, are brought to know God and to be like him. Thus he is more and more realizing in it his power, wisdom, and love. And the universe itself becomes more and more glorious as revealing God; it is filled with ever increasing numbers of personal beings knowing God and working with him in realizing his great ideas, rejoicing in him and with him in beholding that the creation is very good and reflects his likeness and his glory. So the planets reflect the light of the sun; and the earth's atmosphere diffuses the sun's rays and becomes itself luminous all over and through and through in the light of day; it refracts the rays into rainbows and the glowing colors of the dawn and the sunset; the earth and all things on it are beautified and variegated in colors of countless shades; and all organic life and growth reveal hidden powers and resources of the sunshine in its invisible heating and actinic energies. It is the glory of the sun which is here seen. All these are exponents and revealers of what the sun is. In these we see the likeness of the sun, its true significance and power, more perfectly than in the sun itself. If the sun were intelligent, wise, and good, its chosen end in all its action would be to act itself out as the sun, to pour forth its own glory through the universe, and make it glorious as the exponent and revealer of the sun.

II. The Theological Statement. — God does all things for his own glory. Of the three biblical representations, theology has commonly adopted the third.

1. The doctrine must first be defined and explained, in order to correct common misapprehensions and misrepresentations.

The glory of God is his perfections and his action expressing them, considered as making him worthy of the esteem and approval of himself and of all rational beings. More briefly expressed, the glory of God is that which makes him glorious.

The doctrine, therefore, is not that God's chief end in all which he does is to secure the esteem and praise of created beings. This is a misrepresentation which is very common. The esteem and praise of men must be distinguished from God's

perfections and their expression in action which make him worthy of their esteem and praise. Character is what a man is, reputation is what he is thought to be. Reputation, fame, praise, renown, are words denoting merely what men think of a person. To say that a man has esteem, praise, renown, among men, whether they think well of him or not, would be using words without meaning. The word "glory," on the contrary, denotes that which makes a man worthy of esteem, praise, and renown among men, whether they actually esteem and praise him or not. It denotes the essential worthiness or worth of the man. The same is true of the word "honor." Whether a person is glorious or honorable or not, does not depend at all on what people think of him, but only on his own intrinsic worthiness. A person's sense of honor is his sense of his own worthiness.

> "Say, What is honor? 'T is the finest sense
> Of justice which the human mind can frame,
> Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
> And guard the way of life from all offence
> Suffered or done."

And for a man to have esteem, praise, and renown among men for power and excellence which he does not possess and deeds which he has never done, is not glory and honor. It is rather shame and dishonor. And shame and dishonor denote what is unworthy in a man, independently of what people think of him. So the glory of God consists in his perfections and his action expressing the same; in his essential worthiness of the esteem, approval and praise of all rational beings, whether they esteem and praise him or not. It is unworthy of a rational man and shameful to make it the supreme end of all his life and action to win the praise of men. Much more would it be unworthy of God.

God's glory as thus defined is distinguished in theology as essential and declarative. His essential glory is his perfections. This is an eternal plenitude of glory which cannot be increased or diminished. His declarative glory is his perfections revealed or declared in his action in creating the universe and energizing in it. In thus declaring or revealing his glory God is not seeking the praise of men. He is acting out the Godhood in him. When David charged Solomon, "Be strong and show thyself

a man," he did not mean that he should seek the applause of the people, but that he act out the manhood which was in him and realize in action all the highest possibilities of his being.

God declares or reveals his glory in action more and more through all time. The universe is not complete but is the continuous and progressive revelation of the glory of God. Nature is not the hardened lava of an extinct volcano, but the glowing, quickening and continuous efflux of God's love revealing his eternal wisdom and power. In all scientific discovery and mechanical invention, in all investigation of the constitution of man, of the principles regulating his education and development, the organization and progress of human society, in all study of redemption in Christ and the nature and advancement of his kingdom, we are studying the continuous revelation of the glory of God. And this becomes apparent in the infinite wealth of thought revealed in everything, so that the knowledge of a single object in all its significance and relations requires the whole encyclopædia of knowledge. It is apparent in the inexhaustible wealth of energy, so that the growth of a single plant is effected only by concentring on it the mightiest agencies of the universe; and every plant is equally the centre of all these agencies; and the movement of every planet and every pebble exerts an energy which acts through all the universe. It is apparent also in the unity of these mighty and wide-ranging forces interacting in intricate and endless complications, so that they act orderly under law, continuously and progressively evolving a physical system scientifically exact. And, finally, it is apparent in the greater wealth of thought, the higher order and nobler range of power and the unity of a vaster and more sublime spiritual system, to which the physical system is subordinate, and in which countless beings in the likeness of God are made to know him, and to know one another in their likeness and relation to him, and are united in the harmony and beauty and power of universal love. Galileo said: "Philosophy is written in that great book, I mean the universe, which is constantly open before our eyes; but it cannot be understood unless we first know the language and learn the characters in which it is written." On the other hand, if we learn merely the facts and laws of empirical science, we do but learn the letters without learning the divine name which they spell, and without read-

ing the revelation of God's glory which they record and which constitutes their real significance.

As thus explained, the theological doctrine that God does all things for his own glory has significance as follows. God, actuated by his eternal love, creates the universe and peoples it with ever-increasing numbers of beings like himself in the essential elements of personality and capable of knowing him, of communing with him, of becoming like him in character, and of working with him in his work of love, and so of participating in his blessedness. In thus creating and sustaining the universe and in all his works in it of providence, moral government, and redemption, God's action is regulated by the principles and laws eternal in him, the absolute Reason; and the end which he aims to accomplish is the realization of all ideals of perfection and good which it is possible to realize in accordance with these principles and laws, and which are the archetype of the universe eternal in his all-comprehending intelligence. Thus the universe becomes a true, but ever-progressive, image and revelation of God, becoming more and more complete as such as it is progressively developed. But because the universe is finite, the expression and revelation in it of the perfection and thought of God can never be completed, but will be progressive without end. In brief, we may say that God's end in creating the universe and in his immanent energizing in it is to realize in it the thought of his perfect wisdom by his action in perfect love.

An analogy may be found in the action of a painter giving reality to his ideal on the canvas, or in the action of an inventor giving reality to a creation of his own mind in a machine. We may suppose the end which each is aiming to accomplish to be, not reputation or praise, not pecuniary gain, but simply the realization of his ideal. A better analogy may be in the action of benevolent persons. For example, an association to secure right treatment of the Indians would be aiming, not to gain applause nor pecuniary gain, but simply to realize their own ideals of justice and benevolence to the Indians.

2. This explanation of the theological doctrine that God does all things for his own glory, gives the true meaning of the three biblical representations of God's end in all which he does. This would be verified by an examination of the treatment of the subject throughout the Bible. I will present two examples.

The first is a theophany in which God revealed his glory to Moses.[1] When Israel in the wilderness had forsaken God and worshiped the golden calf, Moses interceded for them. When he had obtained from Jehovah the assurance that he would not cast off the people, Moses said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." The Lord in reply promised to make all his goodness pass before him and to proclaim the name of Jehovah before him; and in view of his forgiving Israel as they had returned to him from their apostasy, he emphatically affirmed his right to be merciful to sinners and forgive their sins. Then he appointed the next morning as the time and the top of Sinai as the place for the promised manifestation of his glory. But he reminds Moses that no mortal man can see his face. Therefore, he says, "while my glory passeth by, I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen." Man, with the eye of sense and within the limits of his finiteness, cannot see God's face and know him fully. He can know God only as he passes by, revealing himself by his action in the universe and among and upon men in human history. The next morning Jehovah descended in the cloud upon the mount, Moses being already there, and proclaimed his name, Jehovah, his memorial name, as being by covenant the God of Israel; Jehovah God [El], a name in which the revelation of his might was perpetuated; but still coupled with the memorial name. He proclaims the fulness of his compassion and graciousness, his forbearance toward sinners, the plenteousness of his mercy, his truth and faithfulness to his promises, his readiness to forgive iniquity, transgression and sin. Finally he proclaims his retributive justice: he will by no means clear the guilty.[2] This theophany, given avowedly for the express pur-

[1] Exodus xxxiii. 7–23; xxxiv. 1–8.

[2] He adds, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," and thus declares a terrible feature in the essential nature of sin that it perpetuates its evil influence from generation to generation. This must be the result of sin among men who are in organic unity as a race, and in a moral system in which we are members one of another. It must diffuse evil and perpetuate its malignant influence. It will bring evil upon the innocent. The murderer, the robber, the swindler, must have his victim; and the suffering of the victim must diffuse woe through the whole circle of those dependent on him. The constitution of the moral system accords

pose to show his glory, shows plainly that the name of God and his glory are essentially equivalent in meaning, and that his glory consists in his perfections and his action in which he reveals them. It is entirely incompatible with the conception that his glory means the esteem and praise of his creatures, and that the assertion that he acts for his own glory means that he acts for the praise of men.

The second example is found in the writings of Paul.[1] He speaks of God's glory as meaning the perfections of God revealed in his action, especially in Christ and in the redemption wrought by God in him. He refers the Corinthian Christians to the narrative in the Old Testament, that after Moses had seen the glory of God, his own face became radiant with the reflection of it, so that it dazzled those who looked at him. So, he says, Christians behold the glory of God, and reflect it back as an image is reflected in a mirror. They are themselves changed into the same image from glory to glory, from the glory of God revealed to the glory reflected back in themselves. He adds that God, who in the beginning caused the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, so that the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ makes our own souls luminous with its light. This also presents the glory of God as his own essential perfections, revealed in his action among men, and especially in the face of Jesus Christ, and in his redemption of men in him. It is at the farthest possible remove from the conception that God does all things to gain the praise of men.

3. The theological doctrine that God does all things for his own glory, as now explained, is a truth which is philosophically necessary. It is a truth demanded by reason.

God must find his end in himself. This is necessary because he is the absolute Being. If he must act for an end external to and independent of himself, then he is not unconditioned and independent, but he is conditioned by something independent of himself. It is equally necessary, because God is the absolute Reason. As such, he must find all truths and laws, as well as all ideals and norms of perfection and good, within himself.

with all the truths and laws of reason. But when any one in it sins, the very closeness of the unity of men in the system diffuses the suffering caused by the sin; and the race relation becomes the medium of conveying its evil influence to posterity.

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6.

It is the only end to which all things can be subordinated in unity. On any other supposition, the universe would be hopelessly heterogeneous. It could never be brought into the unity of a system either scientific or moral.

It includes in itself all other worthy ends. If it is said that God's end should be the well-being of his creatures, benevolence is one of God's perfections, and its full exercise and expression is involved in his doing all things for his own glory. If it is said that God's end ought to be the realization of the true, or the right, or the beautiful, or the perfect, the realization of all these ends is secured in his doing all things for his own glory. Whatever ends reason can judge to be worthy, God's doing all things for his own glory includes them all in itself.

Thus reason approves of God's glory as the only end worthy to be the chief end of God in all which he does.

The doctrine also accords with, and is attested by, the Christian consciousness. Every man who comes to God in trust and penitence, feels that he exists for God, and not primarily for himself. He feels that self-sufficiency and self-seeking, prompting him to live by and for self, are of the essence of sin. The Christian heart sees God's glory in all things.

4. From the doctrine that God does all things for his own glory, as now explained, some important inferences necessarily follow.

God's chief end is not to show himself. His action is not dramatic. Theologians have sometimes used language implying this error. It has even been proposed as a theodicy that God punishes the wicked eternally to show his sovereign power. This can arise only from the conception of God as a capricious almightiness, an arbitrary and resistless will unregulated by reason. It is incompatible with the conception of God as the absolute Reason, whose will, by his own free choice, is eternally in harmony with reason in perfect love. God's action expresses his inmost thought and life with a sincerity, spontaneity, and earnestness as much greater than any man's as the absolute is greater than the finite. Nor does his action express power only, or benevolence only, or any one attribute only, but his whole Godhood.

God's chief end is not his own happiness. This error rests on a Hedonistic philosophy which teaches that happiness is the ulti-

mate end, and the desire of it the ultimate motive of all human action. It is a philosophy which logically leaves no place for moral law and the distinction of right and wrong, and destroys the foundation of immutable morality.[1] It is also incompatible with any worthy conception of God. It conceives of God as a great sensitive nature. His whole life is a life of desires, in the sense of want and an effort to get something to satisfy them. It is a life of acquiring and getting, not of forthputting and imparting, — a life of indulgence and self-gratification, instead of a life of love. It leaves us no theodicy. It compels the admission that God permits suffering and sin because they are essential to his own enjoyment, and punishes sin with everlasting torment because he cannot be happy without doing it. It reduces God to a nature-god. But nature-gods belong to heathenism. God is above nature. He is the creator of all that belongs to nature. He is conditioned only from within himself, by the principles and laws eternal in his own rationality. His action is not originated or conditioned by any external condition or necessity independent of himself. By his own free and self-moved will he is realizing in the finite universe the archetypes eternal in himself, the eternal Reason. We must rise above the finite, which is always dependent and never an original, uncaused cause, to the conception of God as absolutely self-existent, self-directing, and self-exerting, who determines and puts forth his own self-exerting energy in the light of reason and for rational ends, archetypal and eternal within himself. He is not moved by any want, nor by any desire of happiness, for he is God blessed forever. He does not need to receive from without himself in satisfaction of wants, but from his infinite and never-diminished fulness pours forth energy in self-moved and self-directing love. Some theologians have given comparatively little attention to the idea of God as the absolute Being, and therefore to the absolute Reason energizing self-moved in absolute independence and freedom. This grand conception of God has receded into the background. God is thought of as an arbitrary, capricious, almighty will-power, or otherwise even as a being really finite, a sensitive nature, seeking his own happiness as something to be got, incited to act by a sense of want, actually suffering, as some insist, dependent for

[1] The Philosophical Basis of Theism, pp. 193, 256–283.

satisfaction on something external to himself. This conception tends directly to either pantheism or materialism.

Another inference is that the doctrine excludes all favoritism from God's action. His law and his gospel, his righteousness and his good will, the conditions of access to his favor are the same to all. God's action toward every being is always the expression of his divine perfection; it is always exactly accordant with eternal truth and right and for the realization of his eternal ideals of perfection and good. He never deviates a hair's breadth from these principles and aims in his treatment of any of his creatures, through favoritism or partiality to any person. God is no respecter of persons. If he accepts the righteous and rejects the wicked, it is because each act is equally and exactly the expression of perfect wisdom and love in the case. If he chose Abraham and established his kingdom of redemption in its preparatory stages in Israel, if he made that people the medium through whom the Messiah was foretold and from whom he came, it was because he knew this to be accordant with perfect wisdom and love.

God says by his prophet: "I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name."[1] He does not say, Seeing it is you, I will do this. This would have declared partiality and favoritism. He says, Seeing it is I, I will do it. This excludes all favoritism and partiality. God will act here in reference to Israel on the same principles on which he would act in any other case and in reference to any other people. He will act in perfect good will, for the realization of all perfection and good, as he acts in every other case. So in redemption God does not say, Because you are so good I will save you, but, Because I am so good I will redeem you. And the way of redemption having been opened, he says to all: Whosoever will, let him come.

This doctrine also emphasizes the personality of God. He is not a nature-god, but above nature, its author and director. That which is at the basis of the universe is intelligent, rational mind. In a theophany in which Jehovah revealed himself to Elijah, there was a wind which rent the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces; there was then an earthquake, and then a fire. But Jehovah was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in

[1] Ezekiel xxxvi. 22.

the fire. And after the fire was a still, small voice. In that Elijah recognized God, — not in the mighty forces of nature, but in the voice which spoke to him and declared to him God's thought and will.[1]

This doctrine also implies that the order of the universe is primarily rational; and that the physical system is subordinate to the moral or spiritual system. God does all things for the realization of all ideals of perfection and good, in accordance with the principles and laws of reason. The ultimate end of all that God does in the universe is in the sphere of the rational and spiritual. The physical system is symbolic of thought, it gives a place for personal beings to live and act in the spiritual system, and is subservient to its uses. This is poetically set forth in the Blessing of Moses on Israel before his death. He represents the whole system of nature as the chariot on which God rides for the help of his chosen people; "There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven for thy help, and in his excellency on the skies." [2]

III. God Glorifying Himself in Sinners. — God glorifies himself in sinners by exercising his perfections in all his treatment of them. He treats them in a manner that is glorious, — that is, worthy of the esteem of himself and of all rational beings. It is action worthy of God. Though sinners disobey, insult, or blaspheme God, though they sink themselves in the deepest corruption, though they commit the worst crimes, God will never be provoked into any unworthy action towards them. He will not do them the least injustice. He will act towards them in perfect wisdom, righteousness, and good-will. This is evident in the perfection of his law and in the reasonableness of his entire moral government. So God appeals to his people by his prophets: "Come and let us reason together, saith Jehovah. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?" [3] It is evident also in his whole work of redemption and reconciliation in Christ, in which his righteousness and his good will are equally expressed and which opens the way of salvation from sin on equal terms for all (John iii. 16).

[1] 1 Kings xix. 9-18.
[2] Deut. xxxiii. 26.
[3] Isaiah i. 18; Micah vi. 3; Ezek. xviii. 25.

It is worthy of God to institute a moral system in which beings who are personal like God may know and trust him, may commune with him, become morally like him and participate in his work of love, and thus be blessed forever. But it is of the essence of a moral system that it consist of finite free agents under the moral government and law of God. It is of the essence of the moral law that the voluntary refusal to conform to its requirement of universal love must issue in the privation of good and subjection to positive evil; and, if persisted in, must issue in the sinner's final privation of all real good. It is of the essence of a finite person that he must be the subject of development and growth; and this involves the possibility of sin and the inevitable reality of probation. It is of the essence of free will that it must be self-directive and self-exerting; the free agent's determinations cannot be made for him by another, nor created nor changed by any force, not even though almighty. It is of the essence of God as Love that he will exhaust all the resources of wisdom and love available in the case to prevent every free agent from sinning and to reclaim the sinner to the life of faith and love. It is of the essence of free will that it can resist moral influences. The sinner therefore may persist in sin until his selfishness becomes so fixed in its self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying, that God will see that no moral influence whatever will ever be sufficient to reclaim him and that he therefore has passed beyond the possibility of redemption. Then he is left to the issues of his own action; the final sentence, "Depart," only declares the inevitable and unchangeable result of his own persistent alienation of himself from God through his whole existence. In all this, God's treatment of the man will have been in perfect wisdom and love, and in the exercise toward him of all divine perfections. The sinner's action will have been unworthy of a rational person, meriting the disapproval and condemnation of all rational beings and worthy only of "shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). But his privation of all real good brings no reproach or shame on God. On the contrary it reveals the glory of God as eternal Love. He has constituted the universe according to the law of love. Therefore it is forever impossible that a person be blessed who has chosen himself as his supreme object of love, trust, and service, who has thus isolated himself in selfishness, alienated himself from God, put himself

into antagonism to God, to the moral system and all beings in it, and to the fundamental constitution of the universe. And if God had not constituted the universe thus, he would have shown himself indifferent whether his rational creatures lived in universal love or in supreme selfishness. Thus he would have shown that he himself is not the God of love. Thus God glorifies himself in sinners.

It remains to notice some biblical examples of this truth which have been much misunderstood and so have given occasion to objections and debate.

1. The first to be noticed is the comparison of God to the potter moulding his clay. This is used by Paul; it occurs also several times in the Old Testament.[1] In the outset it must be borne in mind that a rhetorical comparison is not to be interpreted like a scientific formula; and that an exact logical meaning is not to be sought in separate phrases or incidents which denote what is merely incidental and constitute the necessary drapery of the figure. It is the main thought indicated in the rhetorical figure as a whole which is to be sought.

As this comparison is used by Paul it evidently does not indicate power alone in the potter, but also and pre-eminently intelligence, foresight, skill, adapting means to wise ends, making a vessel for use or beauty. The potter knows what he is doing, for what he is doing it, and how to do it. The clay knows nothing. How can it dispute the wisdom of the potter and say, Why hast thou made me thus? So God works in intelligence and wisdom to accomplish right and beneficent designs. We in our finiteness and ignorance are not competent to dispute his wisdom and love in what he does.

Paul says, "one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor." The potter makes one part of his clay into a vase for the parlor and another part into a baking dish for the kitchen and the oven. But each is made for an important end, each is perfect in its kind and fitted to the uses for which it was made. So of the creatures of various orders and conditions that God has brought into being, each is made for wise ends, each is adapted to its environment and fitted for the end for which it exists. And though we do not always know the reasons of his doings, we do know that in all his action he is guided by perfect wisdom and love. In the ninth,

[1] Rom. ix. 19–24; Isaiah xxix. 16; xlv. 9; Jerem. xviii. 1–10.

tenth, and eleventh chapters of Romans, Paul is writing of God's rejection of the Jews because they had rejected Christ, of his receiving the Gentiles into his kingdom, and of the conversion of the Jews when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in. And he explicitly teaches that in all the intervening time every Jew, willing to accept and trust Christ, will be accepted by God on the same conditions with the Gentiles. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 12, 13). Therefore the lesson from the potter making one vessel to honor and another to dishonor is that, in the diverse treatment of the Jews and the Gentiles, God is guided in his treatment of each by perfect wisdom and love, and is accomplishing wise designs in his great work of redemption and the advancement of his kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Paul continues: "What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" The word "wrath" is used here anthropomorphically and means God's vindicative justice, his vindication of his law of love by the punishment of sin. Thus in the presence of sin he makes known his power to vindicate and maintain the authority of the law and the integrity of the moral system. But what is the meaning of "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction"? A potter makes no vessel for the purpose of destroying it. The comparison implies that God creates no being for the purpose of destroying it. He creates only with the design that the being created be fitted to realize its perfection and the good end for which it was made. If a vessel begun by the potter is marred, it is only by mistake or accident. But God makes no mistake. If any man is fitted for destruction, it can be only by his own persistence in sin, putting himself at last beyond the reach of moral influence. This is exemplified in the history of the Jews, of whom Paul is speaking. They had fitted themselves to be cast off as a people by repeated backslidings from God into idolatry, as narrated in the Old Testament, from which God, in his great long-suffering, had restored them as often to his favor when they had returned to him, and finally by rejecting the promised Messiah when he came. In the version of 1611 we

read "*the* vessels." The article would imply certain vessels already known as fitted for destruction. But there is no article in the Greek. The absence of the article is in harmony with the explanation which has here been given. This explanation is also made necessary by the fact that the apostle, leaving his figure of speech for the moment, speaks in literal terms of God's enduring them with much long-suffering.

We find, then, in the figure of the potter these lessons. Men by sin may fit themselves to be cast off by God. God in divine love endures them with much long-suffering. He compasses them with the influences of his righteousness and his grace; he exhausts the resources of his wisdom and love available in each case to bring the sinner back to himself. None are cast off till by persistent sin they have fitted themselves for destruction and are fit for nothing else; till they have wilfully carried themselves beyond the reach of moral influence to reclaim them. All these thoughts are obvious in the figure of the potter as used by Paul. It is a gross misrepresentation that it sets forth merely the necessity of submitting to arbitrary and resistless power. The figure does indeed set forth God's power to vindicate and maintain the authority of his government and the supremacy and unchangeableness of his law of universal love in the presence of sin and of sinners who rebel against him in self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying. This he reveals also in the casting-off of Israel, which is the particular topic under consideration. But from beginning to end the predominant thought is, that in God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles he gives expression both to his righteousness and to his benevolence, both to his wisdom and his love; and that, if he casts off sinners, it is only after long forbearance, compassing them with divine influences to bring them to reconciliation with himself, and all in vain.

2. A second conspicuous example of God's glorifying himself in sinners is the Pharaoh reigning when Israel left Egypt. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth" (Rom. ix. 17; Exod. ix. 16). This does not mean that God brought Pharaoh into being on purpose to damn him forever. It means that God raised up Pharaoh for his own name's sake and his own glory, the end for which he does all his works. He glorified himself in Pharaoh

by exercising his divine perfections in all his treatment of him ; by treating him in perfect wisdom, rectitude, and love, in a manner worthy of the approval and esteem of all rational beings. And this is apparent in the history of God's dealings with him. He lived among the most civilized people and was raised up to the throne of the mightiest nation in the world. The judgment of his contemporaries would have been that he was the most highly favored man living. He had all the knowledge of the most learned Egyptians respecting God, the moral law, immortality, and the divine judgment and retribution after death. Moses also had been brought up in the royal family till he was forty years old. Through him and the Israelites, Pharaoh must have had knowledge of the true God. Then came the effort to secure the liberation of Israel from slavery, a slavery more cruel than any which has been known in this country. The effort for liberation began with a petition ; it proceeded to renewed requests accompanied by harmless signs ; then to warnings and signs of increasing severity. It was characterized by long-suffering and forbearance. And when Pharaoh persisted in his oppression, at last the people of Israel asserted their rights and Pharaoh was overwhelmed in pursuing them. The same has been repeated over and over in the history of the nations. Oppressors, who have persisted in their oppression regardless of the cries of distress and the demands of justice, have at last been themselves overwhelmed. And the great heart of humanity has always exulted in their overthrow and given thanks that a God of righteousness rules in the world. The difference in the emancipation of Israel is that in it the veil is lifted, and the hand of God and his justice, silently working in all human progress, are revealed to view.

3. The Bible represents God as glorifying himself in sinners by taking their sin as the occasion of his own wise and loving action by which his kingdom is advanced and the plans of the wicked are frustrated. It is not the sin nor the sinner that advances the kingdom of God. But on occasion of the sin God acts in the exercise of his perfections in a glorious manner, and thus God's action on occasion of the sin advances his kingdom and frustrates the designs of the wicked. The wicked do evil. God steps in their footsteps and does good. In this sense the Psalmist says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee." A striking example

is the history of Joseph. Another is the history of Nebuchadnezzar, as recorded in the book of Daniel. And this has been exemplified in the whole history of the Christian church; so that it has become a proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

4. The general biblical representation of God's punishment of sinners is a further exemplification of the true significance of God's glorifying himself in sinners.

The punishments are inflicted in an atmosphere of good-will. Christ is as righteous on the cross as he is on the judgment-seat; he is as compassionate on the throne of judgment as he was on the cross. God is as benevolent in punishing as he is in saving. God always exercises good-will toward every creature. He exercises ill-will toward none. Malignity is an imperfection. It has no place in God. It is incompatible with his divinity or Godhood. Jesus in his earthly life is the exponent to us, under human limitations and conditions, of the inmost thought and heart of God. He wept over Jerusalem while he pronounced its irreversible doom. He said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not." In like manner, God's pity and good-will toward sinners, even in their punishment, is set forth in the Old Testament. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my compassions are kindled together." And the reason he gives is remarkable, "for I am God and not man." "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"[1] It is a common mistake that the Old Testament presents God as all justice, wrath, and vengeance, revealing himself only in inexorable law, and the New Testament as all mercy and forgiveness, revealing himself only in the graciousness of the gospel. But it is the same God who is revealed in both Testaments; and in the New Testament both aspects of his Godhood, both his righteousness and his benevolence, his law and his gospel are more clearly and fully revealed than in the Old. In the Old Testament he presents himself to his people as their father, mother, husband, shepherd, king, and declares his accept-

[1] Luke xiii. 34; xix. 41–44; Hosea xi. 8, 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

ance of all who come to him with broken and contrite hearts and put their trust in him. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the law of love proclaimed with such clearness, breadth, and severity as in the Sermon on the Mount, and nowhere with such overawing majesty as on the cross, where the Son of God gives up his life in agony in obedience to it and in proclaiming and maintaining its unchangeable and inviolable authority.

In the punishment of sin God declares his glory in the exercise of his righteousness. It is as essential to righteousness that the righteous person abhor and repel all sin and be in antagonism to all wrong-doing, as it is to light that it must cast a shadow when obstructed. Hell is eternally potential in the righteousness of God, which itself is one essential aspect of his love. Whether any person falls under God's condemnation or not depends on the free action and character of the person. The truths and laws of reason are eternal and unchangeable in God, the absolute Reason; they regulate all his action; they are the fundamental constitution of the universe. It is only in accordance with these principles and laws that perfection and good are possible in this universe. The perfection and good of a rational being are possible only in obedience to the law of love, and in harmony with God through loving trust in him. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" is the proclamation of this fundamental fact that perfection and good are not possible in the universe, at any place or at any time, to one who refuses to come into harmony with God in the life of universal love, and who lives a life of selfishness in self-sufficiency, self-will, self-seeking, and self-glorifying. It is, therefore, not so much that a sinner is cast out of heaven, as that, by his own supreme choice of self as the supreme object of trust and love and service, he casts all that is heavenly out of his own soul and his own life. It is not so much that the sinner is cast into hell as that he wilfully kindles the fires of hell in his own soul. Hell is the proclamation of the intensity and unchangeableness of God's righteous love. Every person of right heart must see that this absolute, inflexible, infinite opposition to all wrong is one of the perfections which constitute the glory of God. "Our God is a consuming fire." But the fire is his eternal truth and love, his immutable good-will exercised in righteousness.

The Bible also explicitly affirms that God is glorious in the

punishment of sinners. Paul exclaims, "Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?" (Rom. iii. 5, 6). That is, if it is not righteous for God to punish sinners, his moral government is at an end, and there can be no righteous judgment of the world. The writer of the seventy-third Psalm records his perplexity in view of the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity befalling the righteous. He was well-nigh driven to despair because it seemed to him that God does not punish the wicked, and that, therefore, there is no righteous ruler of the world who maintains in it the law of righteousness. And this has been the common source of perplexity and skepticism as to the existence of God. It has been the apprehension, founded on the seemingly unequal distribution of good and evil without regard to character, that God does not punish the wicked, — not the belief that he does so. And, like the Psalmist, the perplexed persons have found relief and the confirmation of their faith in God only when they have seen that in the end his righteous judgment will render to evil-doers just retribution. It is neither sound, strong thought nor robust virtue which demands a God of mere good nature, who will not maintain and enforce the law of love by punishing transgressors.

The Bible teaches that true penitents see the glory of God in condemning them for their sins. They see that God has always treated them in wisdom, righteousness, forbearance, and mercy, and that they are without excuse for their sins. They no longer blame God, but themselves. The fifty-first Psalm is a confession of sin which, ever since it was written, has uttered the inmost heart of penitents seeking God's grace better than any words of their own could do. And this characteristic of penitence is conspicuous in it, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in thy sight; that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest." And the Bible also represents that under the righteous judgment of God all sinners will see their own ill-desert and the glory of God in their righteous condemnation, so "that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God."

John in his visions in Patmos saw the saints in heaven praising God and shouting, "Hallelujah; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest; . . . for true and righteous are his judgments" (Rev. xv. 4; xix. 1, 2). This book is a series of visions; and

these are not visions of actual events, but of transactions symbolizing actual events. It consists, for the most part, of visions of symbols. Some of the symbols, especially such as refer to the Roman Emperor, are for obvious prudential reasons ingeniously contrived to conceal the meaning from the heathen, while probably suggesting it to the Christians. As I understand it, the book was written in a time of persecution and great distress, probably when the destruction of Jerusalem was already imminent. It foretells the overthrow of the persecuting power and the time when the church, freed from oppression and persecution, was to dwell in peace and prevail through the world. These hallelujahs celebrate the great overthrow of the persecuting and oppressing powers and this triumph of the church. From this point of view, these praises of God express the natural and right exultation of all right-minded persons at the defeat of iniquity, the overthrow of injustice and oppression, and the triumph of truth and right. All will understand this and sympathize with it who have exulted in the defeat of intrigue and corruption and the overthrow of oppression and despotism on many occasions in modern times.

The same principles apply to the punishment of the wicked in the other world. In this life we cannot always see the reasons of God's doings. In respect to the punishment of the finally incorrigible our vision is closely limited ; much remains unrevealed and unexplained. We are perplexed and distressed. We find peace only in trusting the unerring wisdom and the never-failing righteousness and good-will of God. But it may reasonably be expected that the saints in heaven will see clearly revealed what God has done in his dealings with sinners, and why he did it. Then doubtless they will see that all God's action toward sinners has been glorious in perfect and adorable wisdom and love. What a relief it will be, what a fleeing away of clouds and darkness, of perplexity and distress, when all which had been dark in the fact of sin is made plain, and we see clearly, what here we have believed without seeing, the glorious perfection of God revealed in it all. Certainly in this discovery the glorified saints in heaven may properly exult and praise God. But we already know beyond all doubt, that, whatever shall actually be the final condition of any sinners for whom Christ died, no person through endless time will ever be blessed or realize any true good in a

life of selfishness, but only in a life of universal love, springing from a continuous loving trust in God.

Thought is made clearer and feeling more intense by contrast. Enjoyment of the warmth and comfort of the fireside is enhanced by the beating of the storm without. But if in the quiet and happy home we hear the shrieks of human beings under the hands of robbers and murderers, the enhancement of pleasure by contrast is overpowered and annulled by compassion for the sufferers and horror at the crime. Much less can this principle of contrast be applied to explain the recognition in heaven of God's glory manifested in his righteous judgments. A good minister, in his public prayer on Thanksgiving Day, said, it is to be presumed by an unwitting misplacement of words: "We thank thee, O Lord, that so many others are in want and misery, while we enjoy the bounties of thy providence." The sentiment which these words express seems to have been uttered sometimes by preachers and theologians in representing the blessedness of the inhabitants of heaven as enhanced by the sight of the sufferings of the wicked. Some of these representations are nothing less than horrible. It is incredible that the writers could have taken in the full significance of their words. These occasional and exceptional misrepresentations, picked out from the immense mass of Christian theology and literature through all the ages, have been made to do service in innumerable repetitions, as if they were the true representations of Christianity and the Christian church. But it is impossible to believe that Christ and his glorified saints will ever look on sinners persisting in sin with feelings other than those of Jesus when he wept over Jerusalem, yet did not revoke its doom. They will praise God because they see that in all his treatment of sinners he has acted in a manner worthy of God, revealing, not obscuring, his glorious perfections.

Here must be noticed the so-called imprecations in some of the Psalms. In the outset allowance must be made for the highly-colored imagery of Oriental poetry, which often seems extravagant to the Western mind. It must also be remembered that the Psalms were written in a rude and ferocious age. Therefore the forms of expression do not indicate the same moral feeling in the mind of the writer which the same expressions would indicate now. Underneath these forms of expression are a true principle and a right sentiment which are true and right

everywhere and always. On the cruel persecution of the Waldenses in the Alps for their purer religion, Milton wrote an ode, which from the day it was published till now has roused the hearts of all readers to a healthy and honorable indignation against oppression and wrong-doing, and to admiration of fidelity to truth and right and God, even unto death.

> "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
> When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
> Forget not; in thy book record their groans
> Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
> Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
> Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
> The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
> To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
> O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
> The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
> A hundredfold, who having learned thy way
> Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

This is an imprecatory psalm of modern times; and the noblest sentiments of the human heart are in sympathy with it. All our desires for the detection and punishment of crime, for the pure and effective administration of justice, for the deliverance of the oppressed and the overthrow of oppressors are of the same nature. He has lost half his manhood, half of the divinity that is in him in his likeness to God, who is no longer capable of indignation against wrong-doers, of desiring the overthrow of oppressors and the confusion and frustration of all schemes for fraud and corruption. If the writer of these psalms knew that God's kingdom existed in its germ within the rough bur of the Israelitish theocracy, and that its enemies were destroying the knowledge of the true God and opposing the progress of his kingdom which was to bring the Messiah into the world, the best impulses of his heart and the clearest judgment of his reason would prompt him to oppose these efforts, and to desire with all his soul the confusion of all their designs and their complete overthrow. And so in all ages the noblest sentiments of humanity prompt and the deepest moral principles approve the cry of human indignation and anguish in view of the suffering of the helpless under overpowering and defiant wrong-

doing. For the sighing of the needy, for the oppression of the poor, arise, O Lord, and render into the bosom of the wicked the reproach wherewith they have reproached thee. And this is the sentiment uttered in heaven by the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar: "How long, O Lord, faithful and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. vi. 10).

IV. Man Glorifying God. — God will glorify himself in all men, whether they intend it or not. Whatever men do, God will glorify himself in them. This has been thought to be a very objectionable doctrine. But it is now evident that it is not so. It means simply that, whatever men do, God's action toward them will be just right; it will be the expression of perfect wisdom and love, — action worthy of God and in which he is worthy of universal approval and praise. God's glory is beyond the reach of any creature. No creature by his own action can bring any stain on it, or provoke God to act so as to dishonor himself. Necessarily, therefore, whatever the creature may do, it will be the occasion of God's acting just right, and so of displaying his glory.

Why, then, are men required to glorify God? This does not mean that they are to make him glorious, but only that they are to recognize and declare his glory. To this a knowledge of God's glory is necessary. One does not glorify God who worships him under the form of a crocodile or a cat; or who regards him as an arbitrary and capricious will, a mere almightiness unregulated by rational truth and law, or as a Spirit of vengeance, or of justice not included in love and vitalized by it. The more complete and true the knowledge of God, the more complete and full may be the recognition and declaration of his perfections, in which and in their wise and loving exercise his glory consists.

Men also recognize and declare God's glory by choosing him as the supreme object of trust. All finite persons are creatures dependent on God. All right character and life in finite beings, whether men or angels, must begin and go on in faith or loving trust in God. Man as a sinner is also dependent on God for forgiveness and for the quickening of the indwelling Spirit. This continuous trust of finite persons in God is the recognition and declaration of their normal relation to God as dependent creatures

and of his goodness in creating them capable of knowing him and in graciously receiving them into communion with himself. For a man to refuse thus to trust in God is to repudiate his condition as a creature and his need as a sinner, and to set up for himself in self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-seeking. It is not glorifying God, but glorifying self. But in the very act of trusting God the man recognizes and declares God's trustworthiness and his sufficiency for all the needs of his creatures. Thus he glorifies God.

Men glorify God also by complacency in his perfections, and the adoration and praise in which they give it utterance. Paul represents God in conversion as shining into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, in conversion persons often see God's glory in his works of creation, providence, and redemption, and radiating on them like sunshine from the commonest objects and events, so that they are in a rapture of praise and adoration.

Men glorify God also by recognizing his hand in all the events of life, by submitting to his will as made known in his providence, his law, and his gospel, by doing all duty as duty to God, by loving and serving men in recognition of their relation to God and in Christ's name and for his sake, and by seeking first the kingdom of God. In all this men recognize and proclaim the glory of God. Paul says, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all for the glory of God." [1] Thus he sanctifies and ennobles our most common and least spiritual acts by connecting them with the glory of God. He exhorts Christians to "walk worthy of God." As a father is honored by the good character and conduct of his children, so God's glory is proclaimed by the worthy character and acts of those whom he has made in his own likeness as rational personal beings, and who, though they had forsaken God, have returned to their father's house and been welcomed by him as his children with the love and joy of a father's heart; "this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." It is one of the instances of J. S. Mill's astonishing ignorance of the New Testament that he insists that Christian ethics lacks the virtues of nobleness. What ethical basis for all that is noble in character can be compared with this, that as children of God we are to walk worthy of him?

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31.

Physical science discloses the fact that the physical universe is constituted and goes on in accordance with unchangeable and universal laws of reason; that its masses, molecules, and forces are ordered and subordinated so that it can be apprehended in the unity of a rational, scientific system; and that in its parts and as a whole it is progressively realizing rational ideals and ends. And it is possible to trace in the physical system a subordination to ends beyond itself in the spiritual or moral system. The heavens declare the glory of God; the earth is full of his goodness; all his works are done in truth. Thus in science man glorifies God when he discovers and declares the revelation of God's glory in the universe.

God desires to have his name or glory known. It has been explained that God's end in all which he does is not primarily to show himself. His action is not dramatic. It is the acting-out of all which is divine in him; the realizing of the archetype of perfect wisdom and love eternal in himself, the absolute Reason. His action is the energizing of eternal Reason itself, expressing its eternal truth, in accordance with its eternal laws, realizing its eternal ideals of perfection and good. But having created intelligent personal beings, he would have them know him as he really is in the perfection of his power, love, and wisdom. This is implied in his command to men to glorify God. It is explicitly asserted many times in the Bible. This is implied also in the fact that in all his works he is revealing himself. Pre-eminently his redemptive action in human history, culminating in Christ and his Holy Spirit, is his revelation of himself to men. This fact, that he desires men to know his glory, is not inconsistent with the doctrine of God's doing all things for himself, his own name or glory, as it has been explained, but is a necessary inference from it. The universe is constituted in accordance with the principles and laws of reason eternal in God, and for the realization of its rational ends. Therefore finite rational beings can have no true knowledge of themselves and of the universe in which they live except as they know God and see his name or glory revealed in themselves and the universe. Their true well-being is possible only as they know God and their dependence on him; as thus dependent they rest on him in loving trust, and come into harmony with him as revealed in his perfect wisdom and love and with the universe in the constitution and evolution of which his

perfections are revealed. Therefore it is his infinite love which prompts him to reveal himself to man. And so Jesus says: "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ."

PART III

GOD THE LORD OF ALL IN PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER XIV

GOD THE LORD OF ALL: — HIS GOVERNMENT IN ITS GENERIC SIGNIFICANCE

The doctrine of God's end in creation, as explained in the last preceding chapter, is the basis for the doctrine of God's government of the universe. The clearing of that doctrine from prevalent misapprehensions and from the consequent difficulties and confusion of thought, gives us a basis for a clear statement of the doctrine of God's government, free from the misapprehensions commonly attending its discussion, and therefore not open to the objections usually urged against it. The true knowledge of God's government depends also on right conceptions of human personality, of free will as related to reason, and of moral character as related to free will. Inexactness of language, indefiniteness of thought, and erroneous opinions on these subjects have occasioned a large part of the perplexities and difficulties common in the discussion of the government of God, and of the objections and disbelief occasioned by it. In another volume [1] I have presented the real significance of personality, of free will, of moral character in its relation to free will, and of moral responsibility, moral government, and the moral system. Those views, if accepted, give precision of thought and language in discussing the universal government of God, relieve us of much of the perplexity and difficulty attending it, and from misapprehensions and confusion of thought on which the force of the objections depends.

[1] The Philosophical Basis of Theism, chaps. viii., xv., and xvi.

Starting with correct and definite views on these fundamental points, we may hope to pass through, or rather above, the labyrinthine perplexities commonly attending the investigation of God's universal government, into a clear and satisfactory knowledge of it. There will remain only the mystery always inseparable from the action and revelation of the absolute and infinite Being in the conditioned and finite.

The subject of this chapter is God's government in its generic meaning.

I. Definition. — In popular language, God's government of the universe is his management or control of it. More fully defined, God's government of the universe is his action in and through it, continuously and progressively revealing and expressing his perfections and realizing the ends of his perfect wisdom and love.

In this conception of God's government the physical universe is no longer regarded as a finished product, like an iron casting, which can be changed only by being broken. But God's power is plastic in it, developing it to higher forms and through successive epochs. It is like a living and growing organism. The living power of God is progressively guiding its development to the realization of its ideal, as the life in a tree guides all the mechanical and chemical energies in it to the realization of its ideal. And as trees die and decay after dropping the seeds of numberless new growths, so particular solar systems, after they have accomplished their ends in subordination to the moral and spiritual system, may be resolved into nebulous matter and evolved into new suns and planets. But God always directs and governs the majestic processes, progressively revealing in them his own perfections, and realizing the ends of his wisdom and love.

It was the theory of "the illustrious Malebranche" that we see all things in God; and he presented this as the fundamental explanation of the mathematical laws of the elementary impact of solid bodies. Of this theory Comte says: "When such a genius in an age so enlightened has been unable finally to conceive of any other real means of explaining a probable theory but by formally recurring to the continuous activity of a direct and special providence, such a verification ought without doubt to render utterly undeniable the inevitable tendency of our intelli-

gence towards a philosophy radically theological, whenever we would penetrate, under any title whatever, to the inmost nature of phenomena, following therein the general disposition which necessarily characterizes all our primitive speculations.'[1] Philosophy from ancient times has recognized the fact that rational ideas and principles underlie all physical forms and combinations; it declares that physical science depends for its existence as science on self-evident principles of reason regulating all thought; and that its necessary postulate is that the universe is pervaded and ordered by reason the same in kind with the reason of man, and regulated by the same principles and laws. Physical science itself is the science which the mind of man finds expressed and revealed in the physical universe; it discovers and declares that the physical universe is constituted and arranged along lines and principles of thought which man finds in his own mind as constituent of his own reason, and which, as postulated in all scientific knowledge of the universe, must be ultimately referred to God, the absolute Reason. In this sense it is true that we see all things in God. And now physical science is teaching also that the universe was not merely at its origin arranged along these rational lines and principles and finished in an original act of creation; but that it is continuously evolving along the same lines in the progressive realization of rational ideas and ends. Accordingly, the history of human thought and the progress of civilization are continuously disclosing the fact and confirming the belief that the tendency of the human mind, from the time of the primitive men till now, to find the supernatural in the natural is the result of the primitive and constituent intuitions of human reason; and that the true knowledge of the universe is possible only as it is recognized as the revelation of God, the absolute and eternal Reason. The doctrine of God's universal government recognizes and declares this immanence of God in the universe, realizing in its progressive development the archetypal ideals of his own wisdom and love.

When we think of the universe as dependent on God for its being and continuance, we call him its creator and preserver. When we think of him as acting in and through it in the accomplishment of the purpose of his wisdom and love, we call him its ruler, governor, sovereign, or Lord. But we cannot understand

[1] Philosophie Positive, vol. iv. pp. 663, 664.

aright his government, sovereignty, or lordship without going back to his creatorship. In order to explain his government we must recognize the fact that the universe depends on him for its being and preservation.

II. Classification. — God's government presents itself in two aspects, providential and moral.

1. God's providential government includes all God's action so far as it is the cause, ground, or occasion, immediate or remote, of the actuality or occurrence of events. God's moral government includes all God's action so far as it is related to rational beings as declaring, vindicating, and enforcing the supreme and universal law of love and presenting motives to obey it.

God's providential government pertains solely to the actuality of events. It is not restricted, however, to his action which is the immediate efficient cause of changes and events. It includes all action of God which is a condition without which the event would not have occurred, whether the action be the cause, the reason, the moral influence, or the occasion, immediate or remote, without which the event would not have occurred. In affirming the universality of God's providential government we affirm only that the actuality of all events is directly or indirectly, immediately or remotely, conditioned on some antecedent action of God. No finite being can ever be independent of God, for that would imply that the finite had itself become the unconditioned and absolute.

God's moral government pertains solely to the obligation of rational free agents to obey the universal law of love. In affirming moral government we affirm nothing as to the actuality of events, but only the obligation of rational beings to obey the law. In affirming the universality of God's moral government we do not affirm that all rational beings will be obedient to it, but only that all are under obligation to obey it. They may obey the law of love or disobey it. But if they disobey, they do not escape the universal obligation to obey, nor the consequent and inevitable desert of punishment.

Providential government is of all beings; moral government is only of rational, personal beings.

2. This classification does not divide God's acts of government into two classes numerically; it presents two different aspects of

every divine act. It does not imply that some of God's acts belong exclusively to providential government, and the rest to moral government. Every act of God is in one aspect an act of providential government, in another aspect an act of moral government.

Those acts of God which present themselves primarily in the aspect of moral government disclose also on further consideration the aspect of providential government. God's revelation of his law is an act of moral government. But so far as its influence actually induces persons to obey it, or sinners to repent, it becomes the occasion of the actual occurrence of events, a condition without which the events would not have occurred; in this aspect it belongs to providential government. The revelation of God's grace in Christ and the Holy Spirit presents itself primarily as belonging to moral government. But so far as this redemptive action of God actually draws sinners to faith and repentance, it is the ground of the actuality of the event and so belongs to providential government.

On the other hand, acts of God which present primarily the aspect of providential government are found to present in addition the aspect of moral government. The heavens declare the glory of God. All God's action in the physical system reveals his perfections and is thus a motive to trust and serve him. In this aspect it belongs to his moral government. Because the universe is constituted according to the principles and exists to realize the ideals and ends of God's perfect wisdom and love, it takes up into its constitution and reveals in all its development and progress God's government in its moral aspect. It becomes of itself the agency which reveals and enforces the law of love. If a person lives a life of universal love, all the agencies in the universe work together to insure his realization of the highest possibilities of his being, and therein his highest blessedness. But if a man lives a life of selfishness, all the agencies in the universe work together against him to prevent his realizing his true well-being.

3. God's providential government is subordinate to his moral government. This has been already established, both in the examination of God's attributes and of his end in creation. The universe is constituted in accordance with the principles and laws, and for the realization of the archetypal ideals and ends, of

absolute Reason. Therefore providential government is subordinate to moral. God's chief end in his action is never in the physical but always in the spiritual; it is never merely to bring an event to pass, but in and through bringing it to pass to realize the ends of perfect wisdom and love. The conception is not of the physical universe finished and the course of events in it determined, and then moral government brought in afterwards, in subordination to the physical system, to find in it such place for itself as it can. But in the mind of God the rational and moral system is first and dominant, and for it and in subordination to its laws and ends the physical system is brought into being. Hence we find the physical system to be symbolic of rational ideas, ordered under rational law and progressive toward the realization of rational ideals of perfection and well-being.

This subordination to moral government is indicated in the words *providence* and *providential*. These denote God's foresight in all his action, looking beyond the physical to the spiritual, beyond the actuality of the event to the ends of wisdom and love to be accomplished in and through it.

In this subordination of providential government to moral we find the unity of God's government in these two aspects. A house must be built and furnished before a family can live in it; and afterwards there must be continued action, insuring the actuality of events of various kinds. But all this is subordinate to beneficent ends in securing the support, education, and well-being of the family; and in this subordination the whole action, in building the house and taking care of it, and in the management of the family, is in unity. So the actuality or occurrence of an isolated event is never the ultimate end in the government of God; but in and through the event in its relation to the whole system of things God is accomplishing something in progressively realizing the archetypal and all-comprehending thought of the absolute Reason and all the ends of wisdom and love included therein. Thus all God's action in one aspect of it is providential government, and in another aspect it is moral government; and it is all in unity and harmony through the subordination of the former to the latter.

III. God's Right to be the Lord of All. — It may be thought presumption for man even to ask what is God's right to

govern the universe. But this right of inquiry is involved in the fact that man is capable of knowing God. Human reason is finite, yet it is the same in kind with reason in God. Man is in God's image and participates in the light of the divine reason. Man therefore can know God. With this knowledge he is capable of judging whether God is worthy of his trust, love, and obedience. This implies his knowledge of God's rightful authority to rule. It is only as he sees the rightfulness of God's authority, the justice of his law, the reasonableness of his commands, that the man sees himself without excuse as a sinner, justifies God, and in penitential trust returns to God in willing obedience. If man is incapable of knowing the reasonableness and rightfulness of God's authority and law, he can never know himself as a sinner justly condemned for his disobedience. Accordingly the penitent Psalmist takes to himself all the blame for his sin, and declares the perfect righteousness of God: "that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest" (Ps. li. 4).

Reason knows itself as having authority to command. A rational being knows that he ought to obey reason. It is the prerogative of man, as himself endowed with reason, to ascertain whether any assumed authority to command obedience is itself the authority of reason. It is contrary to reason, and degrading and demoralizing to a rational, free, personal being, to be subjected to arbitrary and overpowering force, or to be compelled to obey any being whose right to command he does not know and is not permitted to investigate.

This right of judging the rightfulness of God's authority and law is recognized by God in his revelation of himself recorded in the Bible. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." "Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?"[1] In the very act of revealing himself to men in the requirement of his law, and the invitation and promise of his grace and in all his redemptive action, he appeals to their reason and judgment as rational beings.

God's right to govern is in the fact that he is God. It is involved in his Godhood. It rests both on his absoluteness and his personality, — on the fact that he is absolute Spirit.

It cannot rest solely on his power. This is indispensable to

[1] Isaiah i. 18; Ezek. xviii. 25.

the exercise of lordship. That God is the First Cause, the source of all power, the Almighty, is one element in his right to reign. The universe is dependent on him for its being. He has created it, and has it on his hands and at his disposal. But this alone is not sufficient to constitute his right to reign. Might cannot make right, even though it be almighty. Almightiness may compel by force, but it cannot govern. Even material things are properly said to be governed only as the force that moves them is regulated by law. Much less can the lawless compulsion of a rational being by force be properly called government.

On the other hand, God's right to lordship does not rest exclusively on his wisdom and love. The mere fact that a being is wise and good does not give him the right to govern others.

Dr. N. W. Taylor teaches that God's right to govern rests on the fact that he is able and disposed to govern better than any other.[1] Here power, wisdom, and love are combined. But the mere ability and disposition to govern well does not give a person the right to rule all others. All these are essential to the right to lordship, to the authority to govern, but they are not sufficient. Something more is necessary.

God's right to govern is in the fact that he is God. God is the absolute and unconditioned, the self-existent, all-originating, and all-conditioning Being. That such a being exists is a necessary principle of reason, and a universal law of thought. In every line of thought, man finds the existence of this Being to be the ultimate basis of all reality, and of all knowledge of reality. Without this basis all knowledge evaporates into sensationalism and subjective idealism, and all reality disappears. If we consider the existence of the universe and the powers energizing in it, we are necessarily carried back to the absolute Being, the First Cause, the self-existent source of all finite being and power, the unconditioned and the all-conditioning. If we examine the sphere of rationality and knowledge, we find that the reality of our knowledge rests on the existence of the absolute Reason. If we study the first four fundamental ideas or realities of reason, the True, the Right, the Perfect, and the Good, our knowledge of each rests on the absolute Reason as the ultimate reality, in whom all norms of truth, right, perfection, and good are eternal and underived. All science rests on the postulate that the universe is per-

[1] Moral Government, vol. i. pp. 276–349.

vaded and regulated by Reason essentially like our own, and is constituted in accordance with its fundamental principles, laws, and norms. All ideals of perfection and beauty imply norms of perfection and beauty eternal in the absolute Reason. All our estimates of the good which we seek to acquire, possess, and use, rest on norms or principles of reason by which we determine what objects of pursuit and acquisition are worthy of a rational being or have true worth. In God is the unconditioned and all-conditioning source of all power, and also of all truth, of all perfection, and of all good.

The same is true in the sphere of ethics. The Right is an ultimate and fundamental idea or reality of Reason. Reason knows itself as having authority to command. Every rational being is conscious that he ought to obey reason, conscious of obligation and duty, conscious of law authoritative and imperative, conscious that this does not originate in himself. And here, as in the other lines of thought, the reality of all moral ideas, of all duty and obligation, of all law, authority, and moral government, rests ultimately in God, the absolute Reason, in whom the law of right is eternal and of absolute authority, unconditioned and all-conditioning.

But here, also, the mere idea of the absolute, abstracted from the positive attributes which give it content, issues in agnosticism. We find God's right to rule only in the complete idea of God; only as we recognize in him the self-existent, eternal God, unconditioned and all-conditioning, in the plenitude of almighty power, the First Cause of all being; in the perfection of eternal Reason, the eternal seat and source of all truth, of all right, of all law and authority, of all perfection and all good; in the fulness of wisdom and love, the all-perfect God.

The conception of God is unique. He is the only God. His right to reign is in the fact that he is God. He is the one only and eternal source of law, authority, and government. There is no right human law which is not an expression and application of the law of God. There is no rightful human government which does not derive its authority from God.

It is sometimes said that God's right to govern is in the fact that he is the creator. This is allowable only when creatorship is understood as signifying not merely that he is the First Cause, the source of all being and power, the almighty, but also that he

is the absolute Reason, the eternal seat and source of all truth, right, perfection, and good, perfect in wisdom and love.

This view of God's right to sovereignty accords with God's revelation of himself recorded in the Bible. It is not there formally defined and vindicated. In declaring and vindicating God's sovereignty on different occasions, reference is made to different aspects of his Godhood. Sometimes the reference is to his knowledge and wisdom, sometimes to his righteousness, sometimes to his benevolence and graciousness, often to the fact that he is the creator of the universe, that it is his and at his disposal. In each case the reference is to the aspect of his Godhood best suited to the occasion. But the teachings of the Bible, comprehended in unity as a whole, declare that God's right to Lordship is in the fact that he is God. This seems to be comprehended and declared by David, not in a logical formula, but in language of rapt devotion: "Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."[1]

When the Bible refers God's right to rule to the fact that he is the creator, it must be understood as implying that he is the Father of spirits as well as the creator of matter and its forces, that he is the eternal seat and source of all truth, law, perfection, and good, as well as of all power. I have already shown that the comparison of the potter and the clay necessarily refers to the rational knowledge, skill, and design of the potter, as well as to his power. Paul and Isaiah silenced the objector with the question: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"[2] But this very question has force only as it assumes that God's right to reign is inherent in his Godhood. It is itself an appeal to the fundamental principles of human reason to declare that if God exists he is the rightful and sovereign Lord of the universe. The idea of God and it alone carries in its essence the rightful authority to rule as sovereign Lord of all. And this excludes all rule or sovereignty of man over man, except as the authority to rule is derived from God.

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. [2] Rom. ix. 20, 21; Isa. x. 15, and xlv. 9.

This subject calls our attention to the rights of God. The thinking of this age has been intent on the rights of man. Theology has been occupied with the same. It has been busy defining and defending man's freedom of will, and in scrutinizing God's government to ascertain whether he gives to every person "a fair chance." There is danger that, looking too exclusively in this direction, theology may become one-eyed and one-sided. It is necessary to large, roundabout, comprehensive thought that we attend also to the complemental truth and give due consideration to the just rights of God. These are comprehended in his right to absolute sovereignty over the universe. The government of the universe can never be a democracy, or a republic, or an aristocracy. It must be the absolute sovereignty of the one only God.

IV. God's Sovereignty, both Absolute and under Law. — In the course of theological discussion the sovereignty of God has acquired factitious meanings founded on erroneous conceptions. In fact, it means no more than lordship or government. It is necessary, therefore, to ascertain the real significance of these words and clear them from misconceptions. We shall find that God's sovereignty, lordship, or government is at once absolute and under law.

1. It is absolute. In his government of the universe God is unconditioned by any being, power, or law independent of himself; he is unconditioned and all-conditioning. In this sense it is absolute sovereignty.

It is underived. His authority is not delegated, his power is not given, his law is not imposed on him from any source independent of himself. They are original and eternal in God.

His sovereignty is undivided. In human government there is need of dividing the powers of government. The legislative, judicial, and executive powers are exercised by different persons. But in the divine government they are all united in God. There is no being or power other than himself to whom he is responsible.

He has all power to accomplish whatever he wills. Whatever is done or not done in his government, the reason of it is never a defect of power or of any perfection, but is always the completeness of his perfections.

These contrasts with human government help us to understand

the absoluteness of God's government. We sometimes distinguish human governments as absolute and limited. But no one of them can be absolute in the sense in which God's government is so.

2. God's sovereign action in governing the universe is regulated by law. It is always accordant with and regulated by the principles and laws, and directed to the realization of the archetypal ideals of perfection and good, which are eternal in himself, the absolute Reason. This has been already elucidated and established. It has been shown that these principles and laws, these norms and ideals of perfection and good, eternal in the absolute Reason, determine what it is possible for power to effect, and also what it is obligatory on every rational being to choose and to do. They determine the sphere of power and the range of what is possible, and also the sphere of duty and the range of what is obligatory. They thus determine the constitution of the universe, both of its physical and its moral systems. As thus constituted and determining, they are the flaming bulwarks of the the universe,[1] the fixed barriers which no physical force and no power of free will can create, annul, change, or transcend. In the moral system a free agent has power to disobey the eternal moral law. But he cannot annul or change the authority of the law, nor the principles of its commandments, nor the guilt and ill-desert of the transgressor. He cannot make it possible to attain perfection and well-being in a life of selfishness, nor to fail to attain them in the life of love.

Here it is objected that, while this is true of finite rational and free moral agents, it cannot be true of the almighty God, because it would imply limitation. One answer is that this is no limitation, because the principles, norms, and laws in accordance with which he acts are not imposed upon him from without by any power or authority independent of himself, but are constituent elements of perfect reason, eternal and absolute in himself. In an analogous way man, in the likeness of God as spirit, is a law to himself in his own reason and conscience. If God were not thus under law, he would be destitute of reason and would not be God, but a limited and imperfect being inferior to man. Then the universe would not be grounded in reason, nor con-

[1] "Flammantia moenia mundi" (Lucretius, "De Rerum Natura," Lib. i. 73, 1102).

stituted, ordered, and evolved according to its principles and laws, and for the realization of its ideals. It would be a chaos, and science and all human knowledge would be impossible.

The objection is answered also from another point of view. The sphere of reason is entirely distinct from the sphere of power; power as such cannot cause any effects in that other and distinct sphere. To establish, change, or annul a principle of reason is not a legitimate act of power. Power multiplied by any number of billions could not create, change, or annul any principle of mathematics, or effect the motion of any body without a cause, or subject virtue to the force of gravitation so that it could be weighed and bought by the pound, or make truth solid so that it could be chopped with an axe. If it were possible for God by almighty power to change or annul a principle, law, or ideal of reason, it would imply that he would divest himself of his own rationality and would cease to be God. It would be God's annihilation of himself. It would therefore be the annihilation of reason itself. Then there would no longer be anywhere any distinction between the reasonable and the absurd, between right and wrong, between perfection and imperfection; the universe would slump into chaos, and science and all human knowledge would dissolve into illusion.

Here it is objected that if God by almighty power cannot change the eternal principles, laws, and ideals of reason, it is at least possible for him to disregard them and to act contrary to them. If we look at almighty power by itself, abstracted from the eternal divine reason and character, God has power to do wrong. He could do more evil than all finite beings together. Here again we reply, if he should choose to disobey reason he would cease to be God, the absolutely perfect being; and the universe, if any could exist, would be grounded in unreason and evolved, not in order but in disorder, in contradiction to reason. Then science and all human knowledge would be impossible.

The conclusion is inevitable, that the consideration of speculative objections like these only forces us back on the principle that the ultimate reality in the universe is not matter but rational spirit. They compel us to see that the ultimate ground of the universe is God, the absolute Spirit. He, in his absolute reason, in his eternal self-determination by his own free choice in harmony with the eternal truths, laws, and ideals of reason, in his

eternal love, is the ultimate ground of the universe, and of all our knowledge and of all our right thinking respecting it. Our knowledge vanishes if it does not rest on him. We cannot even throw our thought back of him. Thought itself breaks down in confusion and contradiction if it does not rest ultimately on God, the absolute Spirit, the eternal Reason, the God who is Love.

The universe being thus constituted, the effect of God's action in his government must be commensurate with the constitution, powers, and susceptibilities of any being or system of beings *on* which he acts, and also with the constitution, powers and capacities of any being or system of beings *through* which he acts.

In view of these principles, we see that God's action in his government is always under law. His almightiness cannot transcend the normal sphere of possibility as eternally determined in the absolute Reason, nor create, annul, or change its eternal principles and laws, its norms of perfection and good, its archetypes of wisdom and love. And in the sphere of obligation his action is under law; by his eternal free choice his will is in harmony with the eternal truths and laws of his own absolute Reason, and is realizing his eternal ideals of perfection and good in the action of perfect wisdom and love.

3. Because God's government is in unity through the subordination of the providential to the moral, and its constant accordance with rational truth and law eternal in the divine mind, all God's action in the exercise of his sovereignty, whether in providential or moral government, is in unity also as directed to the realization of a rational plan or end. What this is has been set forth in the chapter on "God's End in Creation." God's chief end in his government must be the same with his chief end in creation. It is the progressive expression in the universe of his divine perfection, the progressive realization in it of the archetypal ideal of perfect wisdom and love.

Thus his government, lordship, or sovereignty is at once absolute, unconditioned, and all-conditioning, and at the same time subject to rational law and accordant with it, and progressively realizing rational ideals and ends. The universe, in its creation, constitution and development, is a reasonable system, revealing the wisdom and love of God. And so it is safe under his absolute government. Absolute power cannot safely be intrusted to men. The absolute, undivided, irresponsible government of a human

despot may be terrible. The absolute government of an almighty being who is arbitrary, capricious, resistless will unregulated by reason, or who is unwise, or unjust, or unloving, is the most terrific conception which the human mind can form. But the absolute government of the almighty God is benign and full of blessing, because his power is exercised in infinite wisdom and love, in accordance with the truths and laws and realizing the ideals of perfect reason. These are the "rainbow round about his throne" (Rev. iv. 3).

V. Not the Sovereignty of Arbitrary Will. — The sovereignty of God is not the supreme reign of almighty will unregulated by reason and independent of its superior and authoritative principles, laws, and norms. It does not imply that God's will is his law, a doctrine which has exerted a wide and pernicious influence in theology.

1. This error is precluded by the essential idea of God as absolute Spirit, as already set forth. It is of the essence of the true idea of God that his will is subject in all his action to reason and regulated by it; he exercises his almighty power in the light of reason eternal in himself and subject to its eternal principles and laws; therefore all the exercise of his power is in free will under the eternal law of reason; by his free choice he eternally determines himself in all his action in harmony with the requirements of reason and for the progressive realization of its ideals; thus reason and free will are inseparable; all God's action is in universal good-will regulated in its exercise by wisdom and righteousness, that is, in harmony with the principles and laws of reason and for the realization of its ideals of perfection and well-being. Eternal in the absolute Reason are the principles, laws, and norms in accordance with which the archetype of the universe, eternal in the mind of the living God, is constituted, and which determine both what is possible and also what is right and obligatory, — which, when the possible is becoming actual in the universe thus constituted, determine what, according to its constitution, is possible, and what must be, and what ought to be. The error that God's will is supreme and unregulated by law gives a conception of God and his sovereignty contradictory at every point to that which we have ascertained and established. Carried out to its full significance this error implies that love

is right because God has commanded it, not that he commands it because it is right, — that if he should command universal selfishness, it would be right and obligatory and love would be sin. It means that law is the arbitrary decree of an almighty and resistless will, behind which is no reason of truth or law or righteousness. Will-power reigning supreme above all law, imposing its own arbitrary and capricious commands and compelling conformity with them by resistless force, is the essence of despotism and tyranny. If we conceive of such a ruling will as almighty, we have a conception which is simply terrific. And this is the real conception of God's government, if his will is independent of reason and not subject to and regulated by its truths and laws and its norms of perfection and well-being. The very ideas of right and wrong, of law and obligation, disappear, and instead remain only the idea of resistless force and the fear of tormenting and overpowering violence. The conception of free agency and a moral system and government disappears; the universe is forever grinding under resistless force. The conception even of physical law disappears, for the force is no longer that of the universe acting necessarily according to the discoverable laws of its constitution, but it is a living, conscious, almighty caprice.

This fundamental error has appeared at different times, modified in various forms in the history of theological thought. Duns Scotus is its most distinctive representative in medieval theology.[1] The error survived the middle ages. It has widely influenced the theological thought and the religious life of the Protestant churches, and its influence has continued powerful to the present day.

Its influence is seen in ill-considered and misleading theological definitions and propositions. Dr. N. W. Taylor says: "Law is the will of a moral governor concerning the action of his subjects promulgated as an authoritative and perfect rule of action to them."[2] Professor Diman says: "If we restrict the term to its original and proper sense, law must be defined as the

[1] He thought it essential to God's freedom and unconditionedness that he create by the act of his own will what is right and what is wrong; otherwise God would be limited by his own constitution. He exemplifies a legitimate issue of accepting this objection as valid. Occam taught the same error.

[2] Moral Government, vol. i. p. 16.

authoritative expression of will enforced by power."[1] Such definitions of law are not uncommon. Their commonness reveals the surviving influence of the medieval doctrine of the supremacy of almighty will. If this conception had not been already familiar, if the truth that law has its seat in the eternal Reason had been clearly and commonly recognized, such definitions would not have been so commonly given, or, if given, would not have been received without question or criticism.

It cannot be supposed, however, that these theologians accepted or even considered the full logical significance of the definition. Can any explanation be given why this should have escaped the notice of such keen-sighted thinkers? One reason evidently is, that they failed to distinguish sharply between law and government. Government implies the action of the will of a governor or a lawgiver, declaring what the law is in its application to particular cases and what shall be the penalty for transgression, and enforcing the law by ascertaining guilt and inflicting the prescribed punishment.[2] But no government can create the moral law in its eternal principles, nor the rightness or justness of their application in particular cases. Government does not create law, it ascertains what it is, declares and enforces it. Every government, that of God not excepted, is under moral obligation to govern in accordance with eternal law. Kant recognizes this distinction between the enactment or authoritative proclamation of law by a government or lawgiver and the origin of the law itself: "The law proceeds from will. . . . He who commands by law is a lawgiver and is the author of *juridical* obligation, although not necessarily of the law itself; for if he is, then it is a positive and arbitrary enactment. That law, which imposes on us its unconditioned obligation *a priori*, may be thought as proceeding from the will of a supreme lawgiver, that is of God; . . . but this does not mean that he is the author of the law itself."[3]

Another reason why theologians define law as proceeding from will, without noticing the full significance of the doctrine, may be found in the common definition of the freedom of the will, that it consists in the power of contrary choice. This is a definition

[1] The Theistic Argument, pp. 106, 107.
[2] Philosophical Basis of Theism, pp. 188, 189.
[3] Metaphysics of Ethics, Introduction.

of the freedom of the will by power exclusively. Thus the essential connection of will with reason and its essential subordination to reason is entirely left out of view. But in truth this connection with reason and subordination to it are of the very essence of will. Will is a power enlightened by reason. It is only as thus enlightened that it can be a power of self-determination, self-directing and self-exerting. If theologians once come to recognize free will as it really is, they can never thereafter define law as originated by supreme will; for the supremacy of reason and the subordination of will to its principles as law are inherent in the essence of free will and declared in the true definition of it.

The doctrine of the supreme reign of almighty, unconditioned, and arbitrary will has been a prolific mother of errors, both doctrinal and practical. However it may have been modified and its essential significance disguised or overlooked, the infection of evil inherent in it as the essential principle of despotism and carrying in it the possibility of tyranny, has never been suppressed. The common errors respecting the sovereignty of God have, for the most part, originated in this false doctrine, or at least have rested on it as their necessary presupposition. An example is the preponderance in religious thought and life of the fear of God's wrath over loving trust in him, a survival of the terrorism of the middle ages, when Christ himself was regarded as the terrible judge rather than as the gracious Saviour, and Mary was worshiped as the mediator between him and the sinner. The same false doctrine is the necessary presupposition, whether distinctly recognized or not, of that theory of atonement for sin which rests on the conception of God as an almighty potentate who regards sin as a personal offence and demands suffering and blood as a satisfaction to his offended honor, before he can be reconciled to the offender; a demand essentially the same with that of the duelist, and sometimes so described as to be nothing less than bloodthirsty and insatiate vengeance. The same is the necessary presupposition of the doctrine of the unconditional election of certain persons to salvation by the mere arbitrary will of God, without any reason of righteousness or benevolence for the election of one rather than another, and without recognizing a man's free will as a real factor in determining his own character and destiny; and of the accordant doctrine that

God regenerates the elected ones by his almighty and resistless power.[1]

2. In the reaction against the doctrine of the sovereignty of arbitrary and resistless will we must not rush to the extreme of denying or depreciating God's sovereignty under law, exercised in accordance with the immutable principles, laws and ideals of eternal and absolute Reason.

The thinking of the present day tends away from the recognition of the sovereignty of naked arbitrary will enforcing its behests by resistless power. In civil polity the true thinking of our time does not reject government, but demands government under constitutional law. A few extremists, confounding liberty with license and all government with despotism, reject government altogether and become anarchists. In theology we are finding an analogous tendency to reject the conception of God's government as the sovereignty of arbitrary and capricious will, and to recognize it as a government administered in strict accordance with the principles and laws of eternal Reason and for the realization of its archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being. And we find also a corresponding analogous tendency, in the reaction from the conception of the despotic sovereignty of God's arbitrary and resistless will, to depreciate the idea of God's government and law and to disparage his revelation of himself as king and lawgiver and in the development of his kingdom. Some, in their revulsion from the error that God is a potentate whose will is his only law, take positions which logically and practically involve the repudiation of all divine law and government. In a public meeting of a Conference of Congregational churches, I heard a minister say that the conception of God as king, and of his kingdom, belonged to the Old Testament and to Judaism, and since Christ has come is obsolete. The tendency with this type of religious thinkers is to substitute the conception of God as Father for the conception of him as king, lawgiver, or judge. Rev. Dr. Fairbairn and others maintain that alike in the Old Testament, in Judaism, and in the Gentile religions God was never known as Father before Christ

[1] This is shown in an argument by which this doctrine was justified. God, it was said, doing all things for his own glory, must reveal all his attributes. His will is absolutely sovereign. He can reveal that sovereignty only by arbitrarily electing some to salvation and reprobating others to damnation, for no reason but that so he wills. "Sit pro ratione voluntas."

came, — that Christ first revealed to men the Fatherhood of God.

This view is contrary to the teaching of Christ. He continually recognizes the kingdom of God as developed by his coming and to be perpetuated through all ages by the ministration of Spirit. His command is, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Through all the Christian centuries Christ's people have been daily praying in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." In his parables and other teachings he was continually explaining the true character of his kingdom, in correction of the misapprehensions of the Jews. He presents himself as the Messianic king. As such he was recognized by the apostles. The most common title by which he is designated in the New Testament is Lord. Paul presents him in glory as the universal sovereign to whom every knee bows. John sees him enthroned in glory and the saints and angels in heaven offering him their homage. In the Old Testament God is presented as king ruling over his kingdom. But he is presented as Jehovah in covenant with his people, ruling in righteousness and good-will. He is also presented under a great variety of names and aspects. Though the Hebrew is not a copious language, it is said that it has more names and titles of God than any other language. In the Old Testament, God is presented as father, mother, husband, shepherd carrying the little lambs in his arms, vine-dresser (What could I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done in it?), as well as king, lawgiver, and judge. In the Old Testament are sentences and comparisons expressing God's parental tenderness and love as strong and affecting as any in the New. And in the New Testament are sentences and illustrations setting forth his sovereignty, law, and justice as severe as any in the Old. No one of these various representations of God is to be held to the exclusion of the others. The inspired writers take us round to many points of view, that we may see him in various aspects and may gain a more comprehensive and richer view of what he is. We miss the fulness of the revelation if we limit our thought to any one of these names and illustrations and the aspect of God which it designates. As to the assertion that Christ first revealed the Fatherhood of God, it is not only revealed in the Old Testament, but was more or less distinctly recognized in the religions of the Gentiles, as, for examples,

among the Greeks, the Romans, the Hindus, and in the All-Father of the Scandinavians.

This recognition of the Fatherhood of God, to the exclusion of other aspects of his being which he has revealed, tends to obscure the unity of God's kingdom in its progressive development from epoch to epoch. Instead of recognizing the coming of Christ as the great epoch in the development of God's kingdom and of his revelation of himself therein, progressive through the ages, the tendency is to regard the coming of Christ as entirely setting aside the law and kingdom of God as set forth in the Old Testament and originating something entirely different in the revelation of the Fatherhood of God.

This one-sided type of thought, with its declamation against law and government, puts the Christian religion into flagrant opposition to the thinking of the present day. It comes into direct antagonism to science, which recognizes the whole universe as constituted and evolved in exact accordance with law, from the smallest atom to the largest sun. Also in depreciating government under law, it is in direct conflict with the most advanced thinking of our time as to civil polity and the constitution of society, which demands civil government regulated under constitutional law. It is in the line of thought of those who send flowers to convicted murderers and sympathize with criminals, rather than with the government in the maintenance of law and the protection of society from wrong-doers. It drifts towards the line of thought of those who become anarchists, denying all law, civil, moral, or divine, and declaring that law is merely an invention of those who have property and power, to bar out those who have not.

Theological thinkers who follow this line of thought are wont to dwell on the evils resulting from constructing an idea of God's government from the analogy of human government; yet themselves accept a form of human government as the type of the divine, and that, the patriarchal, the earliest and rudest form of human government. They teach that God is not a king, nor a lawgiver, nor a lord or governor: he is a Father. But in a patriarchal government the will of the patriarch is the only law. He may personally be very amiable. But he is a despot. And historically it was from patriarchal government that despotism in the State and the doctrine of the divine right of kings originated. Thus they insist on a type of the divine government in

which the ruler is a single potentate whose arbitrary will is the only law. On the other hand, when the representation of God as king and of his kingdom is rejected as Judaic and antiquated, the suggestion is totally inadmissible that the government of the universe is republican or democratic, and that the Republic of God should be substituted for the Kingdom of God. For this would imply that God derives his authority from the consent of the people whom he has created, and rules only as their representative and is responsible to them. This involves universal anarchy. If the principles of right and wrong and their authority as law are not eternal in God, if the universe is not ultimately grounded in absolute Reason and constituted according to its eternal truths and laws, then there is no basis for an immutable moral law of inviolable authority, and no real authority or government in or over the universe.

3. The doctrine of the sovereignty of God's will creating law by its arbitrary fiat is the basis for denying the necessity of any atoning significance of the redemptive action of God in Christ. According to this erroneous conception of sovereignty, because God creates law by the decree of his absolute will, so by a mere act of will he can change or annul it, can release any one temporarily or permanently from the obligation to obey it in whole or in part. Then, of course, there is no need of atonement in the redemption of sinners. God can remit to any transgressor the penalty of transgression, or deliver a sinner from guilt and sin by a mere act of his almighty will. And there would be no reason why he should do this in such a way as to assert and maintain the universal and inviolable authority of his law. For the law is his will; it is asserted and maintained by his almightiness and by nothing else. Thus the denial of the necessity of the atoning significance of the work of God in Christ in the redemption of sinners from sin, in its true meaning, rests on the presupposition that what is supreme in the universe is lawless will. Then the only necessity for atonement would be, not to maintain and vindicate the supreme and inviolable authority of the eternal, immutable and universal law of absolute Reason, but as a revengeful satisfaction to the offended dignity of the almighty potentate whose will alone is law.

But if law is uncreated and eternal in the absolute Reason, if it is therefore the constitution of the universe, constituting both

its physical and its moral order, then God, whose inmost character and all the action in which he expresses it are always subject to this law and conformed to it, in the action by which he would redeem sinners from their sins, must reveal, assert, and maintain the law and its universal and inviolable authority. He must work redemption, as he does everything else, in subjection to the eternal law of self-sacrificing love, and thus will reveal, assert, and maintain the universality, the unchangeableness, and the supreme and inviolable authority of that eternal law. And precisely this is the atoning significance of his redemptive action in Christ. The hurtful influence, both in doctrine and life of the doctrine that God's will is his law, can never be corrected and arrested by undervaluing or setting aside the law of God, but only by establishing it on a deeper and immovable basis in the eternal, absolute, and universal Reason. And this God is.

Others resolve law into the eternal constitution or nature of things, independent of God. Thus they lose all ground for believing in God and declare that the universe is ultimately grounded in the impersonal.

4. In contradistinction from these speculations, God is truly known only as the absolute and all-perfect Spirit, who is at once, in one indivisible personality, absolute Reason and almighty Will. In him, as absolute Reason, all truth and law, all norms of perfection and good, and the archetype of the created universe accordant therewith are eternal. And as the almighty Will he is by his own eternal free choice in harmony with reason in his inmost and essential character, and also in all his action, in which he is always progressively realizing in the universe the eternal archetype of all perfection and well-being, in accordance with the normal principles, laws, and ideals of reason. Thus in all his energizing, whether in creating and developing worlds, or administering the moral government of the universe, or clothing a lily, or feeding a sparrow, his almighty power is exercised in love which is universal good-will regulated by wisdom and righteousness, in conformity with the principles and laws of reason and for the realization of its ideals of perfection and well-being. He does all that infinite love permits and requires. If he fails to do anything, it is not on account of defect of power but because perfect love exercised in perfect wisdom and righteousness does not permit. If he does anything it is because perfect love thus

exercised requires it. At every point of time and space he does all which perfect love permits and requires in the progressive realization of the eternal archetype of the universe.[1] When once this is clearly known as the true idea of God, the conception of his sovereignty as the reign of lawless will, and the whole brood of errors associated with it, will disappear.

VI. Submission to God's Sovereignty. — God's sovereignty is the ground of submission to his will as revealed both in his providence and in his law.

1. The positive element in submission to God's will, whether revealed in his providential action or in his moral law, is loving trust in him. Faith in God, which in its essence is trust in him, is originating and vitalizing in all right character and action of men. The grounds of a reasonable trust in God are three: his right to govern, the righteousness and benevolence of his administration of his government, and his power almighty to sustain and administer it, regulated only by his own perfect love in accordance with the principles, laws, and norms eternal in his own absolute Reason. The doctrine of God's sovereignty rightly understood declares the reality of all these grounds of trust in God. Thus it is in itself the ground of submission to God's will as made known both in his providential action and in his moral law, and of peace and joy in the fact that he reigns sovereign over all. The sovereignty of God as supreme and almighty will, which has been so widely taught, or at least implied, in theology, has brought terror to many; it has occasioned perplexity and doubt; in some it has crushed hope in despair, in others it has aroused antagonism and led to disbelief of Christianity. But God's sovereignty in its true significance is divested of all these evil influences. Of itself it justifies God in his government, it is the reasonable ground of trust and hope in him, of submission to his will as made known in his providence and his moral law, of peace and joy in the fact that he is Lord of all, and of willing and loyal service in obedience to his

[1] Could this realization be complete, the universe would be the complete stamp or imprint (χαρακτήρ) of God. But this it cannot be, because it is finite. The Logos in Christ, by whom he makes the worlds, is alone himself the effulgence of God's glory and the very image (χαρακτήρ) of his substance (Heb. i. 3).

commands, in following his leadership, and in working with him for the advancement of his kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The question of Elihu to Job is always pertinent: "Should it be according to thy mind?" No man is wise enough, or good enough, or powerful enough, or consistent and persistent enough to be safely intrusted with the independent disposal of his own life and destiny, much less with the government of the universe. To such a being it is reason for unceasing joy that God is Lord of all. So the Bible describes the servants of God rejoicing in his sovereign rule: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice"; "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day. Thy law is my delight."[1]

The doctrine of God's sovereignty, presented aright, recalls attention both to God's right to govern and to the righteousness and benevolence of his government. Theology, if it is not to be one-sided, morbid, and misleading, must take a strong grasp of this truth.

2. We are to submit to God, not to mere almightiness. Carlyle says: "Manhood begins when we have in any way made a truce with necessity; begins, at all events, when we have surrendered to necessity, as the most part only do; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to necessity, and thus in reality triumphed over it and felt that in necessity we are free.[2] Elsewhere, carrying out the same thought, he says: "If hell must be endured, it must." With a deeper insight a Greek philosopher said: "A strict belief in fate is the worst of slavery, imposing upon our necks an everlasting lord or tyrant, of whom we are to stand in awe night and day." Subjection to force, like that of a slave under the whip, is debasing and not ennobling, — brutifying, not humanizing. It is not freedom, but slavery. And if the slave has reconciled himself to his bondage, that is not the beginning of his manhood, but his deeper debasement. If the universe is bound under necessity and fate, there can be no real freedom. Fear of force and violence becomes the only motive to submission. There remains no higher reality and no higher motives, therefore no basis on which a man can rise above the oppressing force in conscious superiority to it even when it crushes him. It is true, man cannot transcend the limits

[1] Psalm xcvii. 1; cxix. 77, 97.

[2] Essay on Burns, in "Edinburgh Rev."

of his finiteness, and finds himself confronted with the unknowable and the inevitable. But when the mysterious and the inevitable come upon him, the wise great man does not weep and cry aloud and tear his garments, as did the ruder heroes of ancient times, whose greatness was in their brawn. He yields with composure to evil which human skill and strength cannot avert. The ground of this calmness and strength is above and beyond the overpowering necessity, in the conviction that the power that is almighty in the universe is itself regulated by reason, that the inevitable and irresistible, which presses on him, itself has its ultimate ground in the eternal truths and laws of reason, is incident to the accomplishment of its rational and worthy ends, and thus is ultimately consistent with God's universal reign of wisdom and love; that in the man himself, under the resistless necessity, are powers and susceptibilities of personality which ally him forever with God; that he possesses treasures of truth and right, of perfection and good, of God's love and blessing, which no force can destroy or take away; that in the very act of meeting aright the adversity that comes on him he insures his own development to the realization of the highest possibilities of his being; that in holding fast his Christian faith and integrity under trial, in standing for truth and right against all opposition, in seeking and saving the lost in the spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love, he is in harmony with God and with all good beings, and in harmony with the constitution of the universe, so that all things work together for his good. Thus he is victorious in his conflict with the inevitable and the irresistible. He finds the truth of Paul's triumphant words, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."[1] This is the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free. He who submits to God in loving trust and service comes into the sphere of universal love and is invulnerable to all the powers of evil. For "who is he that can harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?"[2] This freedom is above that of Carlyle's submission to necessity by as much as the revelation of God's universal love in Christ is above the fatalism of Islam and the heathenism which subjected the gods themselves to fate.

3. Submission to God must be distinguished also from submission to evil. As to death, suffering, and all privation or loss of good, we do not submit to these. We do all in our power, con-

[1] Rom. viii. 37. [2] 1 Peter iii. 13.

sistent with wisdom and love, to prevent, avoid, or remove them. The ship-captain, who in a storm resigned himself to shipwreck and betook himself to prayer and reading the Bible in the cabin, submitted to the storm and to the raging sea, but not to God. Submission to God would have kept him at his post doing his utmost to save the ship. If, in spite of all our strength and skill, the evil comes on us, we submit to God, not to the evil. We recognize it as coming on us under his government of wisdom and love; we accept it as discipline for increasing our spiritual power and perfecting us in the likeness of Christ. Thus we overcome it and are conquerors. There is no warrant in any true conception of God's government for the principle of asceticism that privation and suffering are in themselves good and acceptable to God, and therefore are to be sought for their own sake or inflicted on us by ourselves, as an expiation for sin or as a means of making us acceptable to God. For all purposes of spiritual discipline and development we accept as sufficient the suffering and privation and conflict with evil which, in spite of our wisest and best endeavors, come on us as incidental to our constitution and condition in life, and to our faithful work in the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

As to sin, which is the only essential evil, submission to God's government implies that we abstain from it ourselves, and that, when committed by others, we, to the utmost of our power and according to our best wisdom, resist it in love, overcoming evil with good. This overcoming evil with good means more than treating the evil-doer personally with kindness. It means that love is the essential opposite and contradictory of selfishness, and it alone can overpower and extirpate it. In the exercise of this love we must stand for God and his kingdom against all the powers of wickedness, confronting error with truth, lawlessness with the eternal law of right, sinful character with Christlike righteousness and good-will, the perishable treasures sought by selfish and sinful desires with the good that has true worth, with the imperishable treasures of union with God through loving trust in him, of the perfection of our being in his likeness, of harmony with him and with the constitution of the universe in universal love, and all the happiness involved therein, described as "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," as "being filled with all the fulness of God."

4. God's government being universal, submission to his will and joy in his government are the duty and privilege of every man always. As to God's moral law, every rational being in his inmost character and in every act is under obligation to obey God's law of love and to rejoice in it. And it is an essential element of a sinner's penitent submission to God that he acknowledge God's righteousness and good-will in the evils which, in accordance with God's law, the sinner has brought on himself by his sins, and of which he feels himself to be responsible author, as well as in the blessings which, through God's redeeming grace, sinners receive when they return to God in penitential and loving trust and willing service.

Submission to God in his universal providential government implies that every rational being, in every condition and in every event should recognize God's sovereignty and rejoice in his wise and beneficent rule as Lord of all. Men commonly recognize God's providential government only in times of distress, when their need of help from a power above themselves forces itself on their attention. Harriet Martineau, giving an account of a literary party at which Captain Ross was welcomed on his return from the arctic zone, says: "Lady Stepney told me that the arctic voyagers had gone through hardships such as could never be told; but that it only proved that the Deity is everywhere, and more particularly in barren places."[1] But God's sovereignty is as real, and submission to his will and joy in his reign are as suitable, in prosperity as in adversity. Men commonly think of their dependence on God and their need of his help only in times of weakness and danger. A newsboy in New York had become interested in a Sunday School. His teacher asked him if he prayed. He said, "Yes, every night." But being asked if he did not pray in the morning, he said: "No; any smart boy can take care of himself in the daytime." The simplicity of the boy is repeated at least in the feelings of many of mature age. Canon Charles Kingsley discloses unawares the same impression. In his biography he says that we should verbally recognize God in every event, "even in the breaking of a plate." But why not equally in the preservation of every plate which goes through the dinner unbroken? His remark exposes also the danger of another error. The verbal recognition of God in every little event would be

[1] Autobiography, p. 281.

pharisaical, priggish, and offensive. Submission to God implies only an habitual sense of his presence and of our dependence on and trust in him, — not the continual utterance of it.

Men commonly refer events to God's sovereignty only when they are mysteries and they can assign no good reason for them. This is a survival of the error that God's sovereignty is the supremacy of his naked will. As church creeds have often said: "God of his mere good pleasure," meaning the will acting without reason, the will stripped of all rationality, the will naked and without reason, like the Gadarene among the tombs. But the will of God is never naked, but clothed with rationality and in its right mind. "When we do not know the reasons of God's doings we trust the reasonableness of the doer." But events for which we see the reasons are as really referable to the sovereignty of God. All God's acts are for wise reasons and for the accomplishment of wise ends, whether we know them or not.

5. It must be added, to prevent unwarranted objections, that submission to God's government does not imply that sin and its consequences are to be referred directly to God and submitted to as coming from his hand. God has created free agents, and they live together in the unity of a moral system. Therefore they act on each other for good or for evil. Wicked men are the responsible authors of their own sins and of the evil which they in their wickedness inflict on others. But God's universal government encompasses the whole moral system. In the face of all the powers of wickedness it insures that his is "a kingdom that cannot be shaken,"[1] and that his purpose of wisdom and love cannot be frustrated.

6. It follows that submission to God is not putting one's self into God's hand. All beings are always in God's hand. Sinners are in God's hand not less than saints. Sinners are in God's hand while they fight against him. Submission to God is the consent of the will to being in God's hand, in the act of loving trust and confidence in him, and in willing obedience and service. It is the consent of the will to our actual condition as creatures of God and subjects of his law, thus coming into harmony with him, rejoicing in his reign, and working willingly and joyously with him in the accomplishment of his great designs of wisdom and love. Thus the Christian's peace and joy are as immovable as the throne and sovereignty of God on which they rest.

[1] Heb. xii. 28.

CHAPTER XV.

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT UNIVERSAL.

We have considered God's government in its generic meaning, including both providential and moral government. We are now to consider specifically God's providential government, — that is, God's action on and in the universe considered as the condition, immediate or remote, of the actuality of events. The specific doctrine of this chapter is that God's providential government is universal, extending to all creatures and events. The actuality of every being and event throughout all time and space depends, immediately or remotely, on the action of God. We are to ascertain the true significance of this doctrine, remove misapprehensions and answer objections, and vindicate its truth.

In discussing God's government in its generic meaning it was shown that a recognition of the fact of creation, of the dependence of the universe on God for its being as well as for its ongoing, is essential to a right understanding of God's government. But in order to understand the universality of his providential government and see as clearly as we can in what sense the actuality of the universe, and of all beings and events in it, depends on the action of God, we must push our thought back of creation, to the eternal purpose of God which he is realizing in the creation and government of the universe.

Here we come upon a great question of the ages, how it is possible that God purposes all events consistently with the reality of the moral system and the free agency of man. Mystery, which the finite mind can never wholly clear away, is involved in the very fact that the absolute Being acts and reveals himself in a finite universe existing in the forms of space and time. We are on this side of the line which divides the finite from the absolute and can never pass beyond it to observe from that point of view and with

absolute intelligence how the transition of the absolute into the finite is made. But we know that it is made, that the finite universe exists, and God continuously is acting and revealing himself in it. We rest on the fact, though we cannot fully answer the question of Nicodemus, How can these facts be? an unscientific question, which our Lord rebuked ages before the Baconian philosophy, and which, as setting aside known facts, science now excludes. Therefore mystery is not peculiar to God's universal providence and purpose, but equally pertains to every revelation of himself which God makes in the finite universe. In the preceding chapters we have attained a position above the old controversies on the subject of God's universal providence and purpose and his sovereignty exercised therein, from which we look down on the positions occupied by each party and take up the truth and reject the error of each. It is commonly said that the system of thought on this subject known as the Augustinian or Calvinistic has been abandoned under the light of modern thought. This is not true. The essential truth which gave power to that system remains unchanged. The real change is that erroneous ways of expressing, explaining, and defending the truth have been abandoned, and the doctrine has been broadened by a full recognition of truth which these errors had obscured. Neither party has been vanquished, but a way has been opened for mutual understanding and coalescence. The fundamental truth of the Calvinistic system is the doctrine of God's absolute and universal sovereignty. It is said, "There are theologians who accept this fundamental fact of Calvin's theology and then repudiate its legitimate and inevitable consequences." But usually this repudiation is not of legitimate inferences from the true doctrine of God's sovereignty, but only of inferences from the medieval conception of the naked sovereignty of absolute and almighty will or from some other erroneous representation. We do not deny God's absolute and universal sovereignty, nor any legitimate inference from it, when we affirm that its exercise is regulated by the eternal truths and laws of reason and directed to the progressive realization in the finite of the archetypal ideals of perfection and well-being eternal in the absolute Reason, nor when we recognize the finite free will and the essential characteristics of a moral system in their full significance. God's plan of the universe is primarily in his Reason. His universal purpose is simply the eternal free deter-

mination of his will to act always in accordance with the eternal principles of Reason and progressively to realize its archetypal ideal of all perfection and well-being possible in a finite universe and in a moral system of rational free agents in the process of development under the eternal moral law of love.

I. Statement of the Doctrine. — God knows eternally in his own reason the archetype of the universe, the progressive realization of which, in the forms of space and time, will be the expression of his wisdom and love and of all his perfections. It is the eternal purpose of his will to realize this archetype known in his reason. In this archetype he knows all events incidental to its realization on account of the finiteness inseparable from created being, and on account of the free will inseparable from a moral system. It is the eternal purpose of his will so to act in reference to these incidental events as to express his wisdom and love and all his perfections. In his action in time in reference to these incidental events after they have come to pass, he so acts as to make a perfect expression of his wisdom and love and all his perfections; he does not act otherwise than as he does, because to act otherwise would not be the expression of wisdom and love and divine perfection. The actuality of these incidental events depends, not immediately but remotely, on the action of God; for if God had not proceeded to realize his archetypal idea of the universe, these events would never have become actual. Thus they occur under God's providential government, and are included in his eternal purpose. In this sense God's providential government is universal, and whatsoever comes to pass is included in his providential purpose. Therefore we may say in short, that God's eternal and all-comprehending purpose is to give full realization to the thought of his reason in the action of his will; or, to give full realization to the thought of his wisdom in the action of his love.

The following are equivalent statements of the doctrine. It is God's eternal purpose so to constitute the universe and so to act on and in it in the exercise of his power, as to express in it his own perfections. Or, it is God's eternal purpose so to constitute the universe and so to act on, in, and through it in the exercise of his power, as to realize and express in it, in the forms of space and time, the archetype of all perfection and good accordant with

all rational principles and laws eternal in himself, the absolute Reason. Or, it is God's eternal purpose so to constitute the universe and so to act on, in, and through it in the exercise of his power, as to realize and express in it the thought of his perfect wisdom in the action of his perfect love.

1. God's government and his eternal purpose refer to the same reality in different aspects. The reality is God's relation to the universe, his action in it, and the ends which he is accomplishing therein. When from our point of view in the universe already existing we consider God's action in it, we call it God's government of the universe. When we think of God in his eternal being before the world was made, and try to define his relation to the universe from that point of view, we can think of it only as his eternal purpose which he is to realize progressively in the universe. And because God's government and his purpose are in this sense essentially the same, God's purpose is distinguished as providential and moral precisely as his government is distinguished as providential and moral. His generic purpose is to declare his own glory in the sense explained in a preceding chapter. It is to express and reveal in a finite universe his perfections, his wisdom, love, and power. His moral purpose has reference to personal beings in the moral system, to bring them into willing conformity with his eternal law of love and so to insure to them their highest development and well-being. His providential purpose is to create and develop the universe, to give actuality to the beings and events in it, in order to realize the moral ends eternal in his archetypal ideal. As we have already seen, personality is the only realm of ends and providential government is subordinate to moral. So God's providential purpose to give actuality to the universe is subordinate to his moral purpose to realize the reign of righteousness and good-will among moral beings. From this point of view God's purpose is one, the purpose to realize the archetypal idea of divine wisdom and love in the moral and spiritual system to which the existence of the universe and all God's action in it are subordinate. All which he does to insure the actuality of events is subordinate to this moral and spiritual end. God's purpose is one, through the subordination of his providential government or purpose to the moral and spiritual. Thus we exclude the old and misleading distinctions of God's purpose or will as secret and revealed, as decretive and preceptive, as efficacious and permissive.

2. God's purpose is not an arbitrary fiat of naked and resistless will. It presupposes the plan or archetype which reason sees expressing perfect wisdom and love, and is the free determination of God to realize this archetypal plan in the universe. This has been already established. It is philosophically necessary as demanded by reason. It is also taught in the Bible; it is implied in the inspired declaration that God worketh all things after the *counsel* of his will; wisdom is declared to be the master-workman in the creation of the universe;[1] and the Scriptures throughout represent wisdom, righteousness, and good-will as guiding the divine power in the creation and government of the universe.

Here we have the basis of fixed order and law in harmony with freedom of will. Spinoza, seeking to account for the fixed order and law of the universe to the exclusion of arbitrary and capricious will, was driven, in accordance with his pantheistic philosophy, to recognize necessity at the basis of all things. Some theologians, seeking to exclude arbitrary will and to account for the order and law of the universe, unwittingly follow Spinoza and insist that back of the divine will there must be a necessity in God. But we now see that the basis of the fixed order and law of the universe is, first, the fact that God is the absolute Reason, in whom all truth and law, all norms of perfection and worth, and the archetypal ideal of the universe accordant therewith are eternal; and, secondly, that God by his eternal free choice determines all the action of his power in harmony therewith. This excludes both necessity or fate, and caprice, and recognizes intelligence and freedom, wisdom and love, at the basis of the universe.

In harmony with the fixed order and law is freedom at the foundation of all things. Duns Scotus upheld his extreme theory of the absolute supremacy of will unregulated by law, by arguing that otherwise God's freedom would be limited. The objection is still urged by theologians that God's choice cannot be free because it is eternal. They argue that it is essential to every free choice that it be between different objects and be preceded by a state of indetermination or indifference; and this is not supposable of God. This objection rests wholly upon the old and exploded theory of the liberty of indifference. It precludes all abiding choice and recognizes in the will only the function of ictic volitions, each terminating in a single executive act and

[1] Eph. i. 11, 12; Prov. viii. 30.

relapsing into indifference. It precludes the possibility of character in the will and identifies character with necessity. But according to the true conception of free will as power endowed with reason and therefore self-directive and self-exertive, the will remains free, however fixed and permanent the character; for character in its essence is primarily free choice. God in his eternal choice in harmony with reason is eternally free. Thus in God, — who is the absolute Reason and whose will is in eternal harmony with reason by his own eternal free choice, — order, law and freedom, wisdom and love, are the foundation of the universe and are harmoniously active and revealed in it.[1]

Here also is the harmony of the fixed order and law of the universe with intelligent design revealed in its evolution as a whole and in all its parts and operations. It is of the essence of an intelligent plan that it is for the realization of some end; this end may be internal, the completion of the thing planned, or external, in the uses for others which it subserves after it is completed. But there cannot be external uses of the universe as a whole. All the uses it subserves are within itself. Personal beings constitute the realm of ends. Here is the external end for which the physical system exists and whose uses it subserves. But the finite persons are themselves included in the universe. God alone is external to the universe. The only external end for which the universe exists is to express and reveal the perfections of God, and to realize the ideals of his wisdom and love. The universe is the developing and growing image and expression of his wisdom, love, and power. Herein God is accomplishing within the universe all

[1] The doctrine of Augustine is that the law has its ultimate ground in God's *sapientia prima*, his primitive rational intelligence; in which also are eternal the principles of logic, mathematics, æsthetics, and of all science and art, as well as of ethics and the moral conduct of life. This law eternal and immutable in God is transcribed in rational minds (*transcribitur in sapientes animos*). In accordance with Augustine, Melanchthon says, "The law of God is the rational intelligence (*sapientia*) eternal and immutable in God and the norm of justice in the will of God." On the contrary, the *Formula Concordiæ* says: "Law in its peculiar meaning (*proprie*) is the divine teaching (*doctrina*) in which the most just and immutable will of God is revealed." But in calling the will of God just, it implies its agreement with some law behind it to which the will consents and so is a just will. The philosophy of God's providential purpose which I have presented, though contradictory to much of the medieval and Protestant doctrine on this subject, is in harmony with the philosophy of Augustine and with the best thought of the Reformers.

the ends of perfect wisdom and love. The highest ends within the universe are realized in the sphere of personality. Therefore the highest end to be realized within the universe is the kingdom of God, which includes for finite beings all that is true, right, perfect, and good, and carries in it the realization of all worthy ends.[1]

Theologians, assuming explicitly or implicitly the supreme sovereignty of naked will, have propounded doctrines disclosing utter oblivion of free will, moral responsibility, moral law, and a moral system, as well as of God's righteousness and good-will, in any true significance. Bradwardine says: "Who or what reason could have prohibited the Lord from creating, if so it had pleased him, from the beginning, heaven full of the elect in glory, and hell full of the reprobate in punishment?"[2] Canon Mozley gives the following as the common belief of the Christian Church: "The doctrine of an eternal state of reward and punishment, which all Christians admit, asserts the transference of human wills into a state of necessity, both for evil and good, *by an act of almighty power;* that the wills of wicked men are, on their departure from this life, put *by this act* into a state in which they are beyond recovery; those of the good into a state in which they are beyond lapse. . . . Thus all God's moral creatures pass, at a particular stage of their being, *by an act of divine power*, from a state in which their wills are indeterminate and may choose either good or evil, to a state in which they *necessarily* choose one or the other."[3] Dr. Emmons taught that the only acts of the will are

[1] The doctrine of God's universal and eternal purpose as thus explained has an affinity with the Platonic philosophy. The Platonic eternal ideas, of which the objects in the universe are manifestations and by which they can be grouped in general notions and so designated by general names, become in the light of Christianity ideas eternal in the mind of God, not disintegrated, but in unity in his eternal archetype of the universe. And God's eternal and universal purpose is simply his purpose to realize this archetype in the universe and thus to reveal himself in the finite to finite persons, and to develop his kingdom of light, life, and love, wherein the highest perfection and well-being of his rational creatures will be insured.

[2] Quoted by Canon Mozley, "Predestination," p. 280, note.

[3] Mozley, "The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination," pp. 230, 231. He says: "We attribute to the Supreme Being, the angels and saints in their state of reward, a necessity on the side of goodness; but we attribute to them the operation of a genuine will. We attribute to the evil spirits and the wicked in their state of punishment a necessity on the side of evil, and together with it the same genuine will." He assumes that their action is the action of will, but that the will acts under necessity. His conception is

ictic volitions and that volitions in all men, whether right or wrong, are created by the direct action of God.[1] It is not surprising that men have rejected Christian theism itself when taught to believe that it necessarily involves doctrines so contradictory to common sense and common morality and so totally incompatible with free agency, moral law, and a moral system. But by the correction of the fundamental error of the supremacy of naked will, on which these misrepresentations rest, and the presentation of the true doctrine of God's providential government and purpose, the ground is cut away from under these misrepresentations and the objections to Christianity which they have occasioned.[2]

that the will is free only in a state of indifference and indetermination. He has no conception of character in the will as abiding free choice of the object of action; but only as a pathological impulse or inclination resistlessly necessitating action in accordance with itself. But a will acting in necessity is a contradiction. To say that necessity is freedom is as much a contradiction as to say that light is darkness. Freedom is of the essence of will. A power that is not free in its action is not a will. And when he goes further and says this necessity of the will is created by an act of external almighty power exerted at a particular moment, "on their departure from this life," this also is absurd. It is of the essence of will that it is itself the power that determines. The conception of a will determined by external almighty power is as absurd as the conception of an avalanche stopped in its descent by an argument or an appeal to its pity, or of knowledge driven into a child's head with a hammer. Canon Mozley claims that the conceptions he presents are the commonly accepted doctrines of the Christian church. They certainly have not been universally accepted. So far as they have been held they have been a hindrance to the progress of Christianity among intelligent people. There is certainly no warrant for them in the Bible rightly understood.

[1] Works, vol. iv. Sermon 28, "God's Agency Universal," pp. 383, 385.

[2] These errors involve a fatalism as complete as that of Islam. This is expressed with appalling power in the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam, the astronomer poet of Persia.

"We are no other than a moving row
Of magic shapes, that come and go
Round with this sun, illumined lantern held
In midnight by the master of the show.

Important pieces of the game he plays
Upon this checker-board of nights and days
Hither and thither moves and checks and slays,
And one by one back in the closet lays.

The ball no question makes of ayes and noes,
But right or left, as strikes the player, goes;
And he who tost you down into the field,
He knows about it all — he knows — he knows."

(p. 54, stanzas 68–70.)

3. God's providential purpose is eternal. He has not formed or originated it at any point of time. His action, progressively realizing his purpose in the forms of space and time, we call his government of the universe. But the rational archetype which he is realizing in time and his free purpose or determination to realize it are eternal. Hence it is God's present as really as his previous purpose. It is not an old program which he would now gladly alter if he could. Hence no difficulty is removed by denying God's eternal purpose in order to leave him free to determine what to do in any emergency when it occurs. For God is free in his eternal purpose, and he eternally purposes to act in any emergency just as he would purpose when it actually occurs in time, if it should then first come to his notice. And the denial not only removes no difficulties, but it also creates new ones. It involves the denial of God's omniscience and of his absolute and unconditioned independence; for it supposes God to be ignorant of events until they occur and dependent on their occurrence for his determination of his own action and character.

4. God purposes primarily the realization of his archetypal world-idea in the universe as a system of things, — particular beings and events only as incidental to the system and in their actual places and relations in it. God's purpose never terminates on an isolated being or event. The obvious reason is that there are no isolated beings or events, but all are connected and related in the unity of the universal system. Hence God's eternal purpose is one rather than many. And it is one also, as already shown, in subordination of the providential purpose and government to the moral.

This distinguishes the true doctrine from both the supralapsarian and the sublapsarian or infralapsarian forms of it. The former supposes God's purpose respecting each person to terminate on his destiny, either his salvation or his perdition, passing over his character and conduct, which are determined so as to insure his foreordained destiny. The latter supposes God's purpose to terminate on the character of the person, and his destiny to be according to his character. But in distinction from both of these, the truth is that God purposes primarily the system of things in which he is progressively realizing his archetypal world-idea, and the character and destiny of individuals as they actually come to pass in the system.

This principle removes a whole class of errors and objections. If a person wilfully persists in selfishness in violation of the law of love and so misses all true good, it is objected that God created him only to damn him. Whereas God created a moral system under the law of love, gave this person being in it, and endowed him with the high powers of reason and free will, therein making him in God's image and capable of knowing God and of being blessed in being like him and serving him and his fellow men in love; and God exhausted the resources of wisdom and love in influencing him so to live; but the person persisted in the life of selfishness and thus deprived himself of all true good. God purposed the destiny of this person only as he purposed the perfect moral system and gave to him its high powers and opportunities. A moral system is possible only as it is composed of beings free to do right or to do wrong.

5. So far as God brings events to pass by his own immediate efficiency, he purposes to do so. So far as events are brought to pass by the immediate agency of second causes, this also is accordant with God's purpose. We have seen that God has created the universe having real though dependent being, that he has constituted it in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason, and that it and everything in it must act according to the constitution of its being. God will not change the fundamental principles of the constitution, because the change would be contrary to eternal reason. Immanent in the universe, God acts on, in, and through the beings and agencies in it, causing effects commensurate with the constitution of the being or agency on, in, or through which he acts. Here are three factors in God's providential government; his immediate creative efficiency; the intermediate efficiency of created beings and agencies; and God's action on, in, and through these. These are also all included in God's purpose, because he acts as he does in the full knowledge of all the actual results, immediate or remote, of his action. In these ways, God carries on his providential government of the universe; the physical system is evolved through successive stages; when the physical system is sufficiently evolved to make their existence possible, personal beings appear, and their education, discipline, and development go on under moral law and government, and under redemption. Thus God is progressively accomplishing his eternal purpose to realize in the universe his

archetypal idea of perfection and well-being by the expression of his own perfections and the manifestation of his wisdom and love, so far as possible in a finite universe consistently with the eternal principles and laws of reason.

The doctrine of God's eternal purpose implies no divine power energizing in the universe other than that which is recognized in his providential government. This removes various common errors and objections founded on the idea that if God purposes an event he must interpose his own direct efficiency to cause it.

It follows that the acts of free agents are purposed by God only as their own free acts which he foresees they will do if he gives reality to the moral system which reason demands and which his perfect wisdom and love require. Therefore, it is not properly said that it is God's purpose that men *shall* do as they do, but only that they *will* do as they do; that is, he knows, in the archetype of the universe which he purposes to realize, that they freely will do so.[1]

6. Whatever is in fact the constitution of things under God's government is that which he has eternally purposed.

The relations between God's action and man actually existing in the constitution of the universe are those which God eternally purposes. If men are free agents, in fact God eternally purposes that they shall be so. If God's action does not determine man's action in fact, he eternally purposes to leave man to free self-determination. If God's action is in fact merely the occasion of man's action, he eternally purposes it to be so. If in any case God's action affects man only in the sense that he created him with a certain constitution and placed him in a certain environment subject to certain external influences under which the man acts freely, this is the relation between his action and man's which God eternally purposes. If God comes to man in redemption, and in the Holy Spirit exerts on him influences under which the man freely returns in loving and penitential trust to God, this also God eternally purposed.

The relations of means and end actually existing in God's gov-

[1] Anselm says: "God foresees that I shall sin without necessity; . . . he foresees that the effect will occur in the way in which it proceeds from its cause: freely if from a free agent, contingently if from a contingent cause, necessarily if from a cause acting under necessity." (Quoted by Nitzsch, "Christliche Lehre," § 73, note.)

ernment are eternally purposed by God so to exist. If blessings are obtained in answer to prayer; if they depend on human diligence, as a harvest on the work of the farmer; if men can please God and win heaven only by lives of faith and love, these conditions, actually existing in the government of God, are conditions eternally purposed by him. It is often objected that the doctrine of God's purpose is incompatible with any real efficacy in prayer and the use of means. But the contrary is true. God's eternal purpose establishes indissolubly the connection of prayer, effort, and right living with the obtaining of his blessing. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."[1]

Whatever are the reasons for which God acts in any case are also the reasons why he eternally purposes so to act. All the difficulties in the doctrine of God's purpose are equally difficulties in the doctrine of his government. We escape none of them by denying his purpose. It is a fact that the gospel of Christ has been preached to some peoples and not to others; that some men who have the gospel accept Christ and others do not. The difficulty is always in what God does, not in the fact that he eternally purposes to do so. And whatever explains and removes the difficulties and objections as to what God does in his government equally explains and removes those pertaining to God's purpose. In fact the doctrine of God's purpose in itself gives us relief and a ground of peace in the face of difficulties and objections. We know it to be a purpose of perfect wisdom and love. On this assurance we can rest in faith and peace in the presence of difficulties which at the time we are unable to remove and objections to which we do not yet see the answer.

A theory has been proposed, in the interest of human free agency, that God determines the end or result, but that the means or agency in effecting it are not included in his purpose. But this dissolves all dependence of the end on the means, of the result on the finite agency, and reduces not only human agency, but that of all finite powers to an empty and illusive show. On the other hand, in seeing results depending on their own agency, and on means of their own devising, men are ready to forget their dependence therein on God. A well-known preacher, according to the printed report of his sermon, has recently said:

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 13.

"A merchant may attain his own ends without the assistance of divine power, but the farmer looks to the God of the soil." But the true doctrine is that God's providential purpose and government extend both to the means and the end, both to the finite agency and its effect.

II. Proof of the Doctrine. — It remains to consider the reasons for accepting the doctrine as true.

1. Considered philosophically it is a reasonable doctrine. Difficulties and objections have arisen from misapprehensions of its meaning, from identifying it with false theories and arguments in its explanation and defence, and from attempting to define with too minute particularity the methods and details of God's action and purpose in his government. For example, in this country the doctrine of God's sovereignty was supposed to involve as essential the theory of determinism as set forth by President Edwards in his "Treatise on the Will." So the science of electricity is not to be identified with the theory either of Franklin or Dufay, or even with the present theory of molecular action in an ether. The facts of electricity remain though the theories change. The doctrine of God's sovereignty, as rightly stated, is free from these sources of difficulty and objection, and commends itself to the reason as a clear and indubitable philosophical truth.

First, the doctrine, as stated in this chapter, is involved in the idea of God and of his relation to the universe. It has been shown that God's right to govern is in the fact that he is God; that it is essential in his Godhood and inseparable from it; that the fact that he is the creator of the universe, fully understood, implies that he is Lord of all. Because he is the Creator, the system of things which we call the universe depends always on him for its existence. Every individual depends on God for his constitution and for his environment, and to a great extent for his own peculiar condition and circumstances. And in the spiritual life every created person is dependent on God for his gracious acceptance and influence, and every sinner is dependent on him for redemption and forgiveness. If God had acted differently in creating and constituting the universe, if he had given to the individual a different constitution and environment, if he had brought him into being under different circumstances from those which make his peculiar condition, if he had withheld from his

rational creatures the knowledge of his love, if he had wrought no redemption for sinners, or having wrought it had left them ignorant of it, — on any of these suppositions the course of the free agent's action would have been different from what it actually has been.[1] In one or another of these ways the actuality of every being and event is dependent on God and included in his purpose. And the reason why God has not changed his action in any of these particulars is not any lack of power, if abstracted from reason, to do it, but because he is perfect in wisdom and love and all which he actually does in creating and governing the universe is, by his own eternal free choice, in exact agreement with the principles and laws of reason and the progressive realization of its ideals of perfection and good. Any change in the actual course of God's action would be both unwise and unloving, both foolish and wrong. Thus God's sovereignty is universal; it extends to every event, because every event is directly or indirectly dependent on God's action. Every event is dependent on God at least in the sense that without God's action the event would never have occurred. In this sense the free acts of men are included under the purpose of God, as the ultimate ground of their actuality; but not as the immediate efficiency in causing them, nor as imposing on the man any obligation nor establishing any necessity so to act. On the contrary the purpose of God insures that the man shall freely determine what he will do and freely exert his own power in doing it.

Secondly, the doctrine of God's universal purpose is essential as the only basis for the possibility of any free will, moral law, and responsibility, or moral system in the universe. It is the doctrine that the universe is ultimately grounded in rationality and freedom, not in blind force, necessity, or fate, nor in arbitrary and capricious will, almighty but not regulated by law nor determined in wisdom and love. If this doctrine is not true, if the universe is not ultimately grounded in rationality and freedom, then it is grounded in blind fate or capricious almightiness. But if rationality and freedom are excluded from the ultimate ground of the universe, from its first cause and origin, they are excluded everywhere. If they do not come in at the beginning, they can-

[1] Leibnitz uses the illustration that if Tarquin the Proud had been born the son of a shepherd in Thrace, he might have spent his life in feeding sheep and never have committed the crimes of which he was actually guilty.

not come in afterwards. Then the universe reveals nothing but force acting in blind necessity; and the darkness of atheism settles over it all. It has been often asserted that the doctrine of God's universal purpose involves fatalism. But, in fact, it is the only doctrine which precludes it and establishes the supremacy of reason and free will throughout the universe.

The practical difficulty respecting the doctrine has always pertained to its reconciliation with human freedom and responsibility. Neither Calvin, nor Augustine, nor Christianity originated the discussion of this problem. The two facts of divine sovereignty and human freedom have always confronted each other. The problem of finding their harmony has been discussed ever since philosophical thought began. The two are realities. They must be acknowledged and held fast, whether we can or cannot show just how they are in harmony. Men are wont to overlook or obscure one or the other of two complemental truths; they even mistake them for contradictories. So it has been in this case. The Stoics subjected the gods themselves to fate. The Epicureans banished them from all active participation in the government of the world. The harmony of the two will never be found by obscuring the significance of either, but only by holding each in its full significance. And this is characteristic of the Bible. It does not obscure the significance of either, but presents each, without qualification or explanation, in its full power. It makes no attempt at reconciling them. Its writers, under divine inspiration, seemed to see no occasion for explanation or reconciliation. And when we clear these two great realities from misapprehension and from false theories and arguments, we find, instead of contradiction, that God's rational, eternal, universal and sovereign purpose is the basis of all rationality and freedom; and that without it free agency, moral responsibility, law and government, and a moral system, could have no place in the universe.

Thirdly, the universality of God's providential government is essential to its existence as supreme and absolute government regulated by eternal law. It is essential as insuring that no power in the universe can be above and beyond the control of God. If, for example, the acts of the wicked are not in any true sense under God's providential government and included in his providential purpose, then in doing wickedness the transgressor escapes from God's control and is no longer in God's hand. Then

in transgressing God's moral law he steps over and beyond God's providential purpose and government. He becomes independent of God. Then God is no longer the absolute and unconditioned Being. The evil one is mightier than God. Then the power of wickedness might overmaster God, overthrow his kingdom and frustrate his purpose of wisdom and love. Then the power of evil would be absolute and we should be driven to the old Persian doctrine that it is eternal, self-existent, and independent. But error, sin, and evil are always finite, — of time, not of eternity, of the creature, not of God. God's government is secure above all the powers of evil. "Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; Jehovah shall have them in derision." [1] If indeed anything exists, occurs, or is done in the universe with which God has nothing to do directly or indirectly, then that would be something independent of God, not included in his purpose nor under his providential government. But all theists, believing in God, on whom the universe depends for its existence, must believe, as necessarily implied in this, that every being, power and event in the universe is directly or indirectly dependent on God and therefore subject to his providential government and included under his providential purpose.

Fourthly, God's providential purpose must extend to every event in order to insure the actuality of any event. This rests on the facts that God's providential purpose or government is not only absolute and unconditioned but also regulated by eternal law, and consequently that all things exist in the unity of system under law. The scientific unity of the physical system under its laws of the uniformity and continuity of nature reveals the universality of God's providential government and purpose in the sphere of physical and impersonal being. Under the laws of gravity, of light, heat, and electricity, and of the persistence of force, every planet responds to every energy exerted by the sun, and the movements of every planet are responded to by the sun and by every other planet. And every power exerted by beings on the earth reports itself in effects, whether measurable or not by a finite

[1] Psalm ii. 1–4.

mind, in every planet. If one throws a stone or lifts his hand he propagates a force which has come upon him from the universe and which he transmits onward through the universe. If then God's government in the physical system is absolute and universal, but under law, it must extend to every being and action in the system or it cannot extend to any. It must be co-extensive with the reign of law. If it has been purposed that a spar floating on the sea is to be driven ashore at Bar Harbor at noon to-day, the purpose must have included the action on it of every wind, current, tide, and wave which has acted on it, as well as all the antecedents which determined the precise time and place at which it fell into the ocean.

It is equally true of God's providential purpose respecting men, that it must extend to every event in order to insure the actuality of any event. If the least event takes place contrary to his purpose it may frustrate a far-reaching plan. The cackling of geese saved Rome from capture by the Gauls. If they had been silent the history of the world from that time onward would have been changed. In Mohammed's earlier life a woman attempted to poison him in his mutton. Had she given a little more powerful dose, Mohammedism might never have arisen. It is a common experience of men that seemingly trivial incidents have been the occasion of important determinations of the course of life. On the other hand, if God has purposed a particular event he must have purposed its antecedents. It was foretold that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. A decree of the Roman Emperor was the occasion of the journey thither of Joseph and Mary. In order to the issuing of that decree at that time the progress of Rome to dominion must have been what it had been. A single victory changed into a defeat might have delayed or prevented the triumph of Cæsar Augustus, the decree might not have been issued and the prophecy might not have been fulfilled.

If, however, God's providential purpose implies the supremacy of naked will unregulated by law, it would not be necessary that everything be included under his purpose and be subject to his government. When the time came for the floating spar to be landed at the appointed place, if the winds and waves were not bringing it, God, by an immediate exercise of his arbitrary power, could bring it, if necessary, from the Indian Ocean. If God's will in his government were not regulated by law, the universe

would be unregulated by law, and God, by his arbitrary and capricious almightiness, could effect whatever he purposed at any place or time. But because his will is regulated by law, the universe is regulated by law, and therefore God's purpose in the universe is accomplished by his acting in, on, and through the universe and the finite beings and powers in it, and in accordance with the laws of their constitution. Therefore his providential purpose and government must be universal. For the same reason his archetypal world-idea must be realized progressively; its great epochs come, its higher orders of beings and stages of existence are evolved in the slow movement of cosmic agencies acting according to the laws of their being. And in the moral and spiritual system, in the sphere of personality, education, discipline, and development, redemption from sin and the progress of the kingdom of God are progressive in, on, and through finite persons and their agencies and institutions. And the progress is slow, commensurate with the limited powers of the moral agencies through which it is effected. Our Saviour compares it to the slow organic growth of grain; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. And this is so because God's government is regulated by reason in wisdom and love, and is commensurate with the reign of law. It could not be otherwise except by substituting the reign of capricious and almighty will for the reign of reason and law; and this substitution would involve the exclusion from the universe of all rationality, of all free and responsible moral agents, of all moral law and government, and of the whole moral and spiritual system. Sheer materialism, without the order and continuity of nature, would be the necessary issue. But because God's providential purpose or government is commensurate with the reign of law, it must be universal.

2. The doctrine of God's universal providential purpose and government as here set forth, is in accordance with the Bible.

First, the Bible emphatically asserts and everywhere implies that God's providential government of the world is in righteousness and good-will, in wisdom and love, in accordance with eternal truth and law; that it is administered for the realization of the highest moral and spiritual ends, and thus his providential purpose is subordinated to ends of his moral government; that in the creation and government of the universe he is expressing

and revealing all his divine perfections, and so declaring his own glory. God is represented repeatedly as appealing to the reason and moral sense of men to examine and see that all his action towards them is reasonable and right. The Bible represents God's government as absolute, independent, and supreme, yet as regulated by law and administered in the interest of truth, righteousness, and good-will. This is disclosed in the whole of God's historical revelation of himself recorded in the Bible; in the whole of his redemptive action culminating in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, the universality of God's providential purpose and government is also taught abundantly and emphatically in the Bible, both in general assertions and in particular examples. It is unnecessary to cite texts to prove what is implied everywhere in the inspired writings. Among the events referred in the Bible to the providential government of God, are the origin and division of nations (Acts xvii. 26); the revolutions of kingdoms, of which the book of Daniel is a continuous example; the acquisition of wealth and honor (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12); the death of individuals (Job xiv. 5); the sale of Joseph into Egypt; the most minute events, as the casting of a lot, the fall of a sparrow, the feeding of the birds, the numbering of the hairs of the head (Prov. xvi. 33; Matth. vi. 26; x. 29, 30; Luke xxi. 18). The coming of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, the coming of God's kingdom through successive stages, the redemption of men from sin as a whole, and in all its details and results, are always described as the action of God, and referred to his gracious and sovereign purpose.

Thirdly, the Bible also represents the actions of free agents as included under the providential purpose and government of God, but only in such sense that their free agency in their actions and their moral responsibility for them remain unimpaired. This is exemplified in the biblical representations of the guilt of those who caused the crucifixion of Jesus: "Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay"; "For of a truth against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass" (Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28).

In both passages it is plain from the context that the wickedness and guilt of all concerned in causing Jesus to be crucified are emphasized.

Fourthly, the same recognition of man's free agency with God's providential government and purpose is exemplified in the whole biblical record of the history of Israel. The prophets in successive generations habitually recall to remembrance the fact that it was God, known by his memorial name Jehovah as the God of Israel by the covenant of his grace, who brought them out from Egypt and their slavery there. Throughout all the history of Israel, in its great epochs and its critical emergencies, and in the common course of events, the hand of Jehovah is recognized, while the freedom and moral responsibility of the people, alike in their obedience and their disobedience, and their actual efficiency in determining the course of events, are emphatically declared. This freedom and responsibility are assumed by all the prophets, and are the very ground why God sends them to utter their prophetic warnings. The providence of God and the freedom and responsibility of the people in all the history of Israel were recognized in their public worship, and solemnly chanted in the temple (Psalms cv., cvi., cvii.).

In the revelation of these two factors the history of Israel is the type of all history. In it the veil is lifted and God's providential purpose and agency are clearly revealed with and above man's free and responsible efficiency. The same two factors are in the history of Christendom, and in all history, although in some nations and periods the divine providence is more clearly revealed than in others. God has always advanced his kingdom through the agency of chosen peoples. God's hand in America has been the theme of discourses and of written essays; it is as really evident as in the history of Israel. All true philosophy of history must recognize these two factors, the providential purpose and government of God and the agency, plans, and institutions of men. Positivists have sometimes said there can be no philosophy of human history.[1] On the basis of Positivism this is true; and it equally precludes philosophy from every sphere of knowledge and limits science to the phenomena of sense. The only basis for philosophy is the recognition of the fact that the universe is ultimately grounded in Reason freely but progressively

[1] Popular Science Monthly, Dec. 18, 1873.

revealing in it the archetypal ideal of eternal reason in accordance with its eternal truths and laws. The only basis for the philosophy of human history is the recognition of the providential purpose and government of God, under the guidance of eternal wisdom and love, progressively realizing the ideal of all perfection and good through the free agency of rational and morally responsible persons. Every great advance in human progress, like the extinction of negro slavery in the United States of America, and many other great events in recent times, throws light on the moral significance of events, not understood when they were occurring, in their relation to human progress. The growth of God's kingdom in the future will more and more reveal the significance of his providential government, till at last, in the consummation of the divine work of redemption, his grand purpose to declare his glory will be made evident; and then will be heard, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him" (Rev. xix. 6, 7). So the whole history of the world has shown and will continue to demonstrate that "wisdom is justified of her children."

Thus the Bible everywhere recognizes and emphasizes in the history of nations and in all the affairs of men both God's providential purpose and government and man's free will and moral responsibility and his real efficiency in determining the course of events. The inspired writers seem to see no incompatibility of these two factors of human history. They present no theory to explain the mode of their co-operation. The fact that they thus emphasize both proves that the doctrine of God's universal providential purpose and government, as they conceived it, contains no elements incompatible with the free agency and moral responsibility of man, and sets forth a purpose and government planned in eternal reason, accordant with its truths and laws, for the realization of all perfection and good, and administered through the whole history of man in perfect wisdom and love.

CHAPTER XVI

PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT IN RELATION TO SIN

That the fact of sin does not disprove either the love or the power of God was established in the discussion of God's moral attributes. It only remains to ascertain what additional light, from the point of view now attained, is thrown on the true significance of the doctrine that the sin of free agents is included under the providential government and purpose of God, and of the biblical representations of it.

I. From our present point of view we see that God's purpose of the holy character and actions of his rational creatures is positive; his purpose of their sinful character and action is negative. God's purpose is revealed in what he does. His purpose of holy character and action is positive; it is the purpose always to act in the interest of holiness or universal love. In all his action in creating and governing the universe he is revealing his perfections and thus presenting to all rational beings motives to trust and serve him in the life of universal love; in addition to this, in his Holy Spirit poured out on all, he is exerting direct and positive influence to induce men to lead lives of righteousness and good-will; and all his action in his providential government is accordant with the moral law of universal love and subordinated to moral ends in the advancement of his kingdom, the universal reign of righteousness and good-will. And, as already shown, in the case of every individual he does all to prevent his sinning, or, if he is a sinner, to reclaim him to the life of holiness, which perfect wisdom and love require or permit. When he does anything it is because perfect wisdom and love require it; if he does not do more or otherwise, it is because perfect wisdom and love do not permit him to do more or otherwise. Therefore

God's purpose of the right character and action of men is positive. On the other hand, his purpose of the wrong character and action of rational beings is negative; because it is his purpose not to do more or otherwise than he does to lead them to holiness. He purposes that all his positive action shall be in the interest of holiness. Then his purpose respecting sin is not to do more or otherwise than he does to prevent it or to reclaim the sinner from it. And the reason is, that in the case of every individual he does all to draw him from sin which wisdom and love permit or require. As Professor Forbes, of Aberdeen, truly says: "In no case, even that of the greatest sinners, has aught been omitted by God which he knew could possibly avail for their amendment."[1] Then the purpose not to do more or otherwise is not a positive purpose but negative. It is involved in the positive purpose to do for the prevention of sin or reclamation from it all which wisdom and love require, and nothing which wisdom and love forbid. It is like God's negative purpose not to expend moral influence on a tree to induce it to love God and its neighbor. A purpose to expend moral influence to lead to a holy life on a being that, by its constitution like a tree, or by a character confirmed in wickedness, is beyond the reach of moral influence, would be unreasonable.[2] This not doing more or otherwise in any case involves no change in God's good-will, in his gracious disposition toward all his creatures, and his willingness to reclaim them to repentance and filial trust in him, and to receive all who thus return to him and to the life of universal love. This is exemplified in Christ's weeping over Jerusalem while pronouncing the doom which the people had brought on themselves by resisting the long-continued offers and influences of divine love. And God himself declares, "As I live, saith Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And Paul says of God: "Who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."[3]

It follows that the providential purpose of God in its true

[1] Predestination and Freewill and the Westminster Confession, pp. 18, 19.

[2] "Nor is anything ordained by God by which a man is made worse, but only that by which he is made better is ordained." (Augustine.)

[3] Luke xix. 41–44; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Matth. xxiii. 37–39; Luke xv. 1–32.

meaning excludes the reprobation of any to Hell by the decree of arbitrary and almighty will unregulated by law and without reference to the foreseen character of the person, and all ordering by God of the person's circumstances for the purpose of excluding him from salvation, and all positive efficiency of God determining the will in fixed necessity at death or at any time, and the regeneration of the elect by almighty power or irresistible grace while arbitrarily withholding from the reprobate this grace without which they cannot return to God.[1] The doctrines thus excluded are contradictory to reason, incompatible with free will, subversive of moral responsibility, law, and government, and of our fundamental conceptions of the wisdom and love of God and of the reasonableness of all his action. And the doctrine of reprobation is not taught in the Bible. The Greek word translated *reprobate*, denotes that which has been put to the test and found wanting; or, as Grimm translates it, found good for nothing (*ineptus ad aliquid*). Thus the Bible, in its use of this word, asserts the very contrary of an arbitrary reprobation, since the word implies rejection only after probation and failure under it.[2] The man is not worthless because he has been reprobated; he is reprobated because he has been found to be worthless. The sinner's persistence in sin is not the consequence of the divine Spirit's withdrawal, but the Spirit's withdrawal is the consequence of his persistence in sin. And the evil to which he is given over is his own sinful character, his own reprobate mind. He is left to gratify his own evil desires, to persist in his own self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-seeking, the worst and only essential evil. He

[1] Calvin says: "Predestination is the eternal decree of God by which he determined with himself what he would have to be done with every man. For all are not created on equal terms; but to some of them eternal life is preordained, and to others eternal damnation. Therefore, as each has been created for the one or the other of these two ends, we say he has been predestined to life or death." "Therefore if we cannot assign any reason for his bestowing mercy on his people except that such is his pleasure, neither can we have any other ground for his reprobating others but his own will." "Those, therefore, whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other reason but because it is his will to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children." "A horrible decree indeed, I confess" ("Decretum quidem horribile fateor"). (Institutes, Bk. iii. chap. 21, § 5; chap. 22, § 11; chap. 23, §§ 1 & 7.)

[2] Rom. i. 28; Tit. i. 16; Heb. vi. 8; 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 7; 2 Tim. iii. 8.

has chosen the earthly, the sensual, and the devilish as his good, and thus he has shut himself up to it as that which alone he has made himself capable of enjoying. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." "They shall eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices" (Gal. vi. 7; Jeremiah ii. 19; Prov. i. 31; Isa. iii. 10). And this result comes about in accordance with a universal law of the moral system. God's gifts when neglected or misused are withdrawn; when rightly used they are continued and increased.

Here it is asked, Is any relief gained by regarding God as the ultimate ground of the actuality of sin, instead of as its immediate author? Does the intervention of any number of second causes relieve the difficulty, inasmuch as they all depend on the First Cause? This question rests on the assumption that God's purpose is the arbitrary decree of capricious will; and regards God's causal efficiency or almightiness as the only factor in the solution of the problem. If this were all, the intervention of second causes would not remove the difficulty; they would be puppets moving as the master of the show pulled the string. The real efficiency of second causes is a fact essential in any right conception of God's providential government. But we must look beyond the power of God and the efficiency of second causes and comprehend all that belongs to the conception of the universe as grounded in reason, of the reality of free will, of the moral law and the moral system, and of God realizing his world-idea in the action of perfect wisdom and love. The rational free agent is a sort of sub-creative centre of character, action, and influence. After creating such a being God leaves him free to determine for himself his own ends and actions, to direct and exert his own power. Should any other being intrude within his personality and make his determinations for him, he would cease to be a free and responsible agent. Then it is clear that the sinner, however dependent on God, is himself the sole responsible author of his own sin.

Here it may be objected that, according to this doctrine, sin, so far as it exists, frustrates the plan and purpose of God. In respect to this, Canon Westcott says: "Sin did not alter the divine purpose, but it modified the mode of its fulfilment."[1]

[1] Christus Consummator, p. 118.

This perhaps expresses the fact well enough as seen from our point of view within the universe. But whatever modification of the mode of fulfilling God's purpose is made on account of sin is included in his eternal purpose itself. We must suppose that the method of God's realizing his archetypal world-idea is different in view of the fact of sin from what it would have been if none had sinned: yet the actuality of sin was eternally foreknown by God, and was taken into account in his eternal purpose. This signifies that sin is the real and essential evil; that it is a real hindrance and delay to the progressive realization of the archetypal ideal of perfection and good; that the energies of all who are at one with God must be concentrated on reclaiming men from it to the love and service of God; entering into the work of the God in Christ, who came to seek and to save the lost. There is a real conflict in the world between love and selfishness, between the children of light and the powers of darkness. But the powers of evil are finite and dependent, and cannot prevent the progressive realization of all that God in his wisdom and love purposes. This fact that God's eternal purpose to realize his world-idea must take cognizance of the foreseen fact of sin discloses the fallacy of a familiar line of argument. An example is the argument that God in Christ could not have come into the world on account of sin, because in that case this great transaction would have had its ground in the finite and the sinful. But sin foreseen as actual must have been taken account of in the eternal purpose of God; and no man can determine *a priori* by what different methods God would have revealed his glory if man had never sinned. Certainly, as we have already seen, it would be by some revelation of God in his likeness to men and his love for them not less effective than his revelation in Christ. Therefore the great revelation of God in Christ in the incarnation is not conditioned on the fact of sin; but only the forms of the revelation in Christ and the events attending it which were incidental to the fact that he came into a world of sinners. Therefore the argument is not valid that because God eternally purposes to adapt his method of realizing his archetypal world-idea with reference to the foreseen fact of sin, therefore sin is itself eternally and unconditionally necessary in the archetypal idea itself and essential in the constitution of the universe; for in determining his method of realizing his world-idea sin is considered by

God as just what it is, the action of a finite free agent, by his own free choice living a life of supreme selfishness in disobedience to God's law of love. Nothing is eternal or necessary in respect to it except the possibility that a finite free agent may sin. This possibility cannot be eliminated from the conception of a finite free agent and a moral system.

II. God in all his action recorded in the Bible reveals himself as always seeking to prevent sin and to reclaim sinners to the godly life of righteousness and good-will. He thus reveals himself in declaring, maintaining, and enforcing the law of love, in his whole work of redeeming men from sin, and in all his dealings with nations and individuals. There are also general assertions that God is in no sense the responsible author of sin. "All that is in the world," as distinguished from the kingdom of God and antagonistic to it, "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world."[1]

Here the objection is urged that the Bible sometimes seems to imply that God is the immediate author of sin. There is a considerable number of these texts; but as compared with the whole Bible they are very few. The seeming meaning attributed to them is in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the biblical representations of God; and this establishes a strong presumption that the seeming meaning is not the real one.

Some of these texts merely declare that God withdraws his gracious influences from sinners who persist in resisting them. They are left to go on in their own chosen way. He is represented as thus withdrawing from heathen nations, "because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God . . . and refused to have God in their knowledge."[2] He temporarily withdraws his favor from Israel as his chosen people, on account of their idolatry and disobedience; but over and over receives them again when they repent.[3] And at last, when they rejected the Christ, he rejected them finally as having any peculiar privileges as his chosen people, though still inviting them personally to come to him in Christ and offering his grace to them freely

[1] 1 John ii. 16; James i. 13–15; iii. 13–18; Ezek. xviii. 4–32; xxxiii. 10. 11.

[2] Rom. i. 18–32.

[3] Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12; Hosea iv. 17; and many others.

as to all men. He is also represented as withdrawing his gracious influences from individuals in consequence of their persistent resistance of his grace and continuance in sin.[2] God never withdraws his Spirit and grace from any one except in consequence of his resistance of the gracious influences and his persistence in sin.

He does not amuse himself with awakening a sinner's spiritual aspirations while withholding the irresistible grace without which the sinner cannot repent, lifting the sinner toward heaven till he catches some glimpse of its glory and begins to feel some longing to return to God, and then letting him drop only to see him fall deeper into hell. He forsakes no sinner until he sees that the sinner has by his own action so confirmed and fixed his evil character as to be beyond the reach of moral influence to turn him back to the life of faith and love. Then as incorrigible, and only then, sinners are abandoned to themselves. They are left to gratify their own sinful desires and to follow their own sinful determinations. The evil which they suffer is the corruption and perversion of their own being. The final sentence, Depart, is only the declaration of the final and unchangeable separation from God which they have themselves chosen and which they have spent their energies all their lives long in effecting. God awards to the sinner his final destiny according to a fixed law of the moral system, that the neglect or misuse of gifts and opportunities leads to forfeiture and loss, and powers abused are perverted to evil; but the right use of them leads to increase, improvement, and development. God's laws are not enforced, like human laws, at the point of the sword, but through the very constitution of the universe. The sinner's alienation and separation from God, with all the woes incident thereto, cannot be avoided by one persisting in sin, so long as the universe remains constituted according to the principles and laws of wisdom and love and for the realization of the archetypal ideal of all perfection and good.

A second class of these texts comprises three which assert God's universal providential government probably in contradiction of the Persian doctrine that there are two eternal deities, one

[1] Matth. xxiii. 29-39; Luke xix. 41–44; Rom. ix., x., xi.

[2] Matth. xii. 31; Mark iii. 28; Heb. vi. 4; x. 26; 1 John v. 16; Prov. i. 24–33.

good and the other evil.[1] In opposition to this doctrine, these texts assert that sin and evil are finite and dependent, have their existence only in time, and are not absolute, independent, and eternal.

There is a third class of these texts, the language of which seems to affirm that God causes men to sin by his direct efficiency. These are texts in which God is said to harden men's hearts, to lay stumbling-blocks in their way, to send delusion, to stir up adversaries, and the like.[2]

The general explanation is that in these texts God's agency is indicated in popular language without discriminating between the remote occasion and the immediate efficient cause.

The same usage prevails in popular language everywhere and always. It is commonly said that a revival of religion hardens the hearts of those who go through it without accepting Christ as he is offered in the gospel. We speak familiarly of gospel-hardened sinners. This language is understood at once. Nobody solemnly objects to it as declaring that the gospel or the influence of God's Spirit in a revival causes men to sin. In the same manner Paul speaks of the gospel which he preached as a savor of life unto life to those who accepted the offered grace of God in Christ, and of death unto death to those who rejected it. Yet he explains that in each case the gospel preached rose, like fragrant incense, with the sweet savor of Christ unto God, because in each case the good news of God's redeeming grace had been proclaimed to men and all the fulness of his love had come to them in his Holy Spirit to draw them to himself.

It must also be remembered that the habit of philosophical thought was never conspicuous among the Israelites. It is precisely in respect to this that Paul contrasts them with the Greeks.[3] They were wont to refer every event to God, without troubling themselves with exact philosophical definitions and distinctions.

[1] Isaiah xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6; Prov. xvi. 4.

[2] Ex. iv. 21; vii. 13, 3; x. 1, 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 8; Deut. ii. 30; xxix. 4; Josh. xi. 19, 20; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, 20; 2 Sam. xii. 11; xxiv. 1; xvi. 10; 1 Kgs. xi. 23; xxii. 20; 2 Kgs. xxiv. 20; Psalm cv. 25; cvi. 15; Isa. xxvi. 12; viii. 14; lxiii. 17; Jerem. vi. 21; Lam. iii. 38; Ezek. iii. 20; xiv. 9; xx. 25, 26; Zech. viii. 10; John xii. 39; Rom. ix. 18; xi. 7, 8; 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11; Rev. xvii. 17.

[3] 1 Cor. i. 22-24.

The Lord thundereth in the heavens.[1] The same is a peculiarity of other Semitic peoples to this day.

This usage of language is common in the Bible on other subjects. "The Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made." Paul says that our sinful passions are by the law. He afterwards explains that the law is not the cause but only the occasion of our own sinful action.[2] An act cannot be sin if there is no law. The prophets are habitually said to do what they only foretell to be done by God.[3]

The same action ascribed immediately to God in one passage is sometimes ascribed elsewhere to some other agency. In Isaiah we read: "And he said, Go and . . . . make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and convert and be healed." Here, according to the usage already mentioned, the prophet is represented as doing that of which his prophecy will be the occasion. The agency is here ascribed to the prophet. This passage is referred to by John and by Paul, both of whom ascribe the hardening of the heart to God. It is referred to by Matthew and in the Acts of the Apostles simply as stating the fact that the people's heart is waxed gross, that their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, as the reason why they do not understand Christ and receive him as the Messiah. Mark and Luke refer to it as a fact and as the reason why Christ spoke in parables.[4] In some texts it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart; in others it is said Pharaoh himself hardened his heart;[5] in others, simply that his heart was hardened. This reference of the same event sometimes to one and sometimes to another of the various agencies immediately or remotely connected with it, exemplifies and confirms the fact that the writers used popular language without discriminating between the immediate efficient cause and the remote

[1] Ps. xxix.

[2] Exod. xxxii. 35; Rom. vii. 5-12.

[3] Gen. xxvii. 37; Isa. vi. 9, 10; Jerem. i. 10; xv. 1; Ezek. iv. 2; xxxii. 18; Hosea vi. 5.

[4] Isa. vi. 9, 10; John xii. 40; Rom. xi. 7, 8; Matth. xiii. 15; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10.

[5] Exod. viii. 15, 32; ix. 34; 1 Sam. vi. 6; Exod. vii. 22; viii. 19; ix. 7, 35.

occasion of the event. And the same is further confirmed by the actual occurrence of the fact referred to. When a prophet is told to cast out a people or to destroy a city, it is not the prophet who effects the overthrow; but when the people disregard the divine warning through the prophet, the calamity comes on them from a conquering enemy or some other agency, seeming to come about in the natural course of events. When a prophet is told to make the heart of a people fat, to make their ears heavy and to shut their eyes, the event proves that it is not the prophet who does it but the people themselves by refusing to heed and obey the divine warning and the stupefying, blinding, and perverting of themselves resulting from their refusal and resistance. God says by Jeremiah and Ezekiel that he will lay a stumbling-block before his people. But the event shows that the stumbling-block over which they finally fell was their own promised and eagerly expected Messiah. "But for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient."[1]

It is evident that in the texts in question God's agency is indicated in popular language without discriminating between the remote occasion and the immediate efficient cause. God is often said to do what comes to pass through the free action of men or the agency of second causes in nature. This usage should be borne in mind in the interpretation of scripture, especially of the Old Testament.

But even when thus interpreted, these texts, in all the three

[1] Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16; Jerem. vi. 21; Ezek. iii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 6–8; Rom. xi. 32, 33. In the Old Testament the translation of "harden" in the margin is "make strong," that is, "confirm." This suggests the confirmation or strengthening of sinful character by persistence in sinful action. It may be referred to the person as its author, because it is by his own free action that his character is thus confirmed or his heart hardened. Or it may in popular language be referred to God, because the confirmation of sinful character, which is the hardening of the heart, results from the constitution which God has given to the moral system and to the universe in accordance with the eternal principles and laws of reason. In several passages in the New Testament the word translated "hardening" literally means petrifying, or turning into stone. This figure also suggests the law of the confirmation of character by action; for petrifaction is a process in accordance with scientific law.

classes of them, clearly teach that the sins of free agents are in some true sense under the providential government of God and recognized in his providential purpose, — yet only in a sense consistent with the free will of the agent and his moral responsibility as the author and doer of his own sins.

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